

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 (English Language and Literature)		
Title of case study: ICS27.01_Moving through landscape: New perspectives on literature and heritage and supporting creative thinking and practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2019		
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:
Dr Mike Bintley Dr Sonia Overall	Senior Lecturer Senior Lecturer	01/09/2012 – 31/08/2018 15/08/2014 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research concerning the experience, understanding and representation of landscapes, environments, places and spaces, undertaken by Dr Mike Bintley and Dr Sonia Overall has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Given audiences new experiences of literature and landscape, using movement to explore text and place; 2) Enhanced understanding and experience of Kent's heritage, including Folkestone's significant early medieval heritage and St Augustine's Abbey, part of Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage site; 3) Supported creative practice and thinking, including bringing together practitioners and providing social connection during COVID 19 lockdowns. <p>Impact has been primarily to the benefit of our Kent communities and local organisations, realised through activities including: <i>O What We Ben!</i> for the Being Human festival (Bintley/Overall); Heritage Lottery funded <i>Finding Eanswythe</i> (Bintley); work with English Heritage at Augustine Abbey (Overall); and the development of the creative tools <i>DriftDeck</i> and <i>Distance Drift</i> (Overall).</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research underpinning this case study is concerned with investigating the real and literary landscapes of the past and present. Bintley's interdisciplinary research on the landscapes of early medieval England in Old English literature and archaeology, examines human interactions with aspects of landscape, place and space in early medieval England. Overall's research utilises psychogeography, the study of the relationship between place and behaviour, to bring new experiences of literature, landscape and place, and explore the relationship between walking and creativity. Together they have a shared interest in the different ways landscapes (both real and literary) are experienced and understood, and the effect this has on how people think and inter/act with their environment.</p> <p>Bintley's translation of <i>Andreas</i> (2016) in collaboration with Professor Richard North (UCL), was the first scholarly edition and translation of the Old English poem to fully address the work's representation of an urban landscape, as it would have been understood in the contemporary contexts of post-colonial post-Roman Britain. The first edition of <i>Andreas</i> for 55 years, this new volume includes a 115-page introduction re-positioning the work within nearly six decades' progress in palaeography, sources and analogues, language, metrics, literary criticism and archaeology [3.1]. Bintley also investigated the settlement landscape of early medieval England and its representation in works of literature, demonstrating how narratives of urban landscapes reinforce early medieval origin mythologies, and how the regeneration and reclamation of Roman places were closely connected with the establishment of authority in the early Church [3.2]. This was further examined in the context of the translation of the relics of St Oswald to the site of the New Minster in Gloucester in the early 10th century. Bintley highlights the importance of the surrounding landscape in the siting of the New Minster and argues that the relics of Oswald were brought to Gloucester, not only to consolidate its spiritual importance, but also to appropriate topographical and cultural traditions of the surrounding landscape to establish links to the Christian heritage of Rome [3.3].</p>		

Rooted in creative writing practice, Overall's research offers correlations between psychogeography, exploring the effect of landscape, environment and movement on emotions and behaviour, and the relationship of walking to ideation and writing. It broadens the application of psychogeographical theories, with their curiosity-driven and disruptive approach, to the fields of literature and creative practice, articulating a working definition of psychogeography and her creative walking practices (attentive and attitudinal walking) [3.4] [3.5]. 'Attentive walking' was first defined in Overall's article *Walking against the current* (2015) as a method of 'walking without agenda' [3.5]. The application of intention to this practice creates 'attitudinal walking', defined by Overall as 'walks or walking practices employing one or more conscious intentions or attitudes', allowing the practitioner to see place through a particular mode or lens, or to walk with a specific enquiry or topic in mind. First used in *The walking dead, or why psychogeography matters* (2017) [3.4] attitudinal walking can include constraints, such as instructions to disrupt flow, or the reading of landscape through the lens of a text. Overall's practices embrace the heightened awareness engendered through walking and psychogeography to enable writers to see beyond the prescribed and familiar, bringing new insights which can then be put to creative use [3.5]. *The Art of Walking* (2015) is a collection of creative responses to movement and place, engendered through propositional practice research including attentive and attitudinal walking. It queries what walking-writing can be, exploring the relationship between walking and creativity, self and setting. Poems in the 'psychogeography' section are concerned with spirit of place as well as formal experimentation, with site specific poems drawing on historical and cultural connections to landscape and details of place [3.6].

3. References to the research

3.1 North, R. and Bintley, M. eds. (2016) *Andreas: an edition*. Liverpool University Press. ISBN 9781781382714. [Scholarly edition] Double-blind peer reviewed. Available CCCU on request.

Reviews can be found here: <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/books/id/38177/>

3.2 Bintley, M. (2017) 'How deserted lies the city, once so full of people': *The Reclamation of Intramural Space in Anglo-Saxon Literature*. In: Boulton, M., Hawkes, J. and Stoner, H., eds. *Place and Space in the Medieval World*. New York: Routledge. pp. 63-73. ISBN 9781138220201. [Book chapter]. Double-blind peer reviewed. Available CCCU on request.

3.3 Bintley, M. (2014) *The translation of St Oswald's relics to New Minster, Gloucester: royal and imperial resonances*. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 19. pp. 171-181. ISSN 0264-5254. [Journal article] Double-blind peer reviewed.

<https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/item/875xx/the-translation-of-st-oswald-s-relics-to-new-minster-gloucester-royal-and-imperial-resonances>

3.4 Overall, S. (2017) *The walking dead, or why psychogeography matters*. In: Voss, A. and Wilson, S., eds. *Re-enchanting the Academy*. Rudebo Press. pp.349-366. ISBN 9781943710133. [Book chapter]. Available CCCU on request. 'Attitudinal walking' defined in Overall, S. (2019) *Walking into a Creative Writing Practice* Living Maps Review, No 7.

<http://livingmaps.review/journal/index.php/LMR/article/view/178> [Journal article]

3.5 Overall, S. (2015) *Walking against the current: generating creative responses to place*. *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, 8 (1). pp11-28. ISSN 1753-5190. [Journal article] Submitted REF 2. Double-blind peer reviewed.

<https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/item/87q4v/walking-against-the-current-generating-creative-responses-to-place>

3.6 Overall, S. (2015) *The Art of Walking*. Bristol: Shearsman Books. ISBN 9781848614482. [Authored book]. Submitted in REF2. Reviewed by Associate Professor (Reader) Phil Smith, University of Plymouth; specialist on walking, site specific performance, psychogeography and counter-tourism <https://www.mythogeography.com/the-art-of-walking.html>

4. Details of the impact

A strategic focus for impact in this UoA has been the development of relationships within our Kent community, to deliver a wide range of engagement activities to the benefit of our local communities and organisations. Close working relationships within the UoA bring together seemingly disparate research areas around shared concerns. In the case of this study, Overall and Bintley's collective interest in experience of landscape led to collaboration for the 2017 Being Human festival, bringing together creative writing and psychogeography with Old English literature and archaeology. Direct

beneficiaries of impact are primarily located in Kent and include: Heritage organisations; schools and their pupils; creative practitioners, and participants and audiences for activities.

Given audience new experiences of literature and landscape. Funded by the Being Human festival (2017), *O What We Ben!* (Bintley/Overall) mapped the urban landscapes of Mermedonia from *Andreas* [3.1] and Russell Hoban's cult novel *Riddley Walker* (a book set in an imagined post-apocalyptic east-Kent and written in a futuristic Kent dialect), onto modern Canterbury as a site-specific embodied experience of the texts. Via hard-copy maps, a companion website, and walking tours, it connected pivotal moments in both texts with historic places and spaces in Canterbury, with movement through the urban landscape guided by Overall's attitudinal [3.4] and attentive [3.5] walking methods. Three guided walks attracted approximately 30 participants, with engagement extended via an interactive website [5.1a] which has received over 2,000 page views (to 4 Nov 2020). Participants' feedback evidences new perspectives on the text describing the experience as being a 'wonderful imagining of literary and cultural heritage in a meaningful physical setting'; 'magical unpacking of history, fiction and fantasy'; 'an on the ground (literally) experience of walking the text'; and as having 'transformed my understanding of both texts' [5.1b]. *O What We Ben!* featured as a walking interview in a 20-minute segment on BBC Radio 3's 'Free Thinking', one of only three projects included in this programme from 336 Being Human events across the UK. Presenter Matthew Sweet noted how he had previously been unfamiliar with the poem *Andreas* and highlights how this way of 'wandering' through the landscapes of 3 cities (modern Canterbury and those imagined in *Andreas* and *Riddley Walker*) could 'slightly demote the importance of the solid world around us, to make us feel a bit more humble about the time and space we occupy' [5.2]. During the last quarter of 2017 BBC Radio 3 had a weekly reach of 1.96 million [RAJAR].

Overall frequently produces walking events to the benefit of cultural organisations and participants, often bringing together movement through landscape with literature, utilising attentive and attitudinal walking. These include: *Street Walking* for the POW! Thanet Festival, a walk with texts that encouraged women to take up public space where 24 participants produced a *Walking Women's Manifesto* (March 2019); *A Walk with Shrines* (Sept 2018) for Margate Bookie; and *Walk Like Wells: a dystopian derive - The War of the Worlds* (Nov 2016) for the Folkestone Book Festival. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Riddley Walker*, Overall collaborated with Dr Andrew M. Butler (CCCU), Dr Paul March-Russell (University of Kent) and Fiona MacDonald (Feral Practice) to create the multi-disciplinary *Sum Tyms Bytin Sum Tyms Bit* (Oct 2020) for the Canterbury Festival. This day of screenings, talks, panel discussions, creative interventions, featured invited responses from Riddley fans including Neil Gaiman, Max Porter, David Mitchell and Una McCormack, and included a 'distanced' walk by Overall exploring environment through the lens of the novel. It attracted over 70 participants, with feedback noting its thought-provoking nature and fascinating material [5.3].

Enhancing understanding and experience of Kent's heritage. Overall has utilised her creative walking practices [3.4] [3.5] to encourage new interpretations and experiences of heritage sites. This includes the Heritage Lottery funded *Walking Heritage* (2016), a series of walks, workshops and trails in Sandwich, Kent, led by Overall; and a training workshop (2016) for English Heritage volunteers at Walmer Castle, Kent, which used psychogeography to encourage creative ways of experiencing buildings and artefacts. Overall was subsequently invited to work with a team of curatorial and interpretation staff from English Heritage with a brief to develop a new interpretation that would provide an improved visitor experience for families at St Augustine's Abbey, part of Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage Site. The abbey is an open-air site, with ruined walls and little tangible heritage, which previously offered no specific resources aimed at families. The Interpretation Manager (South East) at English Heritage writes how, Overall 'was intrinsic to the development and facilitation' of a series of family forums, 'hosting activities and walks, allowing families to interact with the historical content in a 'hands-on' way [...] Every element of the WHS history which we discussed was easily adapted into a fun game or a self-led activity – this allowed our forum to test out many things which would eventually be incorporated into the physical and permanent interpretation on site' and that her 'playful approach was a perfect fit for English Heritage's aims to 'Bring History to life [...] Significantly, the resources at St Augustine's allow

people to now enjoy the site holistically – not just by listening to an audio guide but also by finding different ways to look at, and engage with, our sites. Sonia’s work was incredibly important in bringing this together.’ An indicator of the success of the finished interpretation was given by an increase in visitor numbers from 18,390 per annum in 2016 to 23,000 in 2019/20 and the site’s Key Performance Indicators in relation to overall visitor experience and bringing history to life, comparing favourably with other projects with significantly higher budgets.’ [5.4]

Bintley’s understanding of the key role material landscape exerted over in the early medieval imagination, and the part this played in the establishment of the early Church [3.2] [3.3] was utilised in *Finding Eanswythe: The Life and Afterlife of an Anglo-Saxon Saint* (2017-2020). This interdisciplinary community heritage project based in Folkestone, Kent, was developed by project lead Dr Lesley Hardy (History, CCCU), with Bintley and Dr Eleanor Williams (Archaeology, CCCU), in partnership with the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) and funded by the Heritage Lottery (£93,500). Folkestone has significant early heritage, which has been largely overlooked and poorly understood. Little was known about Anglo-Saxon princess Eanswythe and the heritage associated with her, despite her purported relics being held in the Parish Church of Saint Mary and Eanswythe, Folkestone; where she was associated with one of the earliest monastic communities in England. Bintley was the period specialist on the CCCU team, and a core member of the *Finding Eanswythe* Research Group, which brought together local non-professional researchers, university researchers, archaeologists and conservationists, to bring new insights into Eanswythe in her historical and cultural context. Landscape is intrinsic to Eanswythe’s story, with surviving heritage features linked to her including a watercourse (associated with her miracle of making water run up hill), a ‘lost’ minster, and the North-Downs Way. In addition, like the New Minster at Gloucester [3.3], the decision to establish an early Church community in Folkestone, would have been influenced by landscape, including prehistoric and Roman features.

The project team developed an extensive public engagement programme to communicate findings and build appreciation for Folkestone’s early heritage. This ultimately reached in excess of 3,500 individuals through over 80 activities and projects including workshops, large public events, talks, walks and excavations [5.5a]. The findings of the research group underpinned the project’s exhibition held in 2019, with feedback highlighting the positive impact on local people and their historic knowledge, including: ‘a wonderful trawl through our local history bringing into our time S.Eanswythe’s legacy’; ‘a fascinating insight into the history of Folkestone’; and ‘thank-you for sharing so much local (yet unknown to me!) information’ [5.5b]. The project’s publication (2020), now available from St Mary and St Eanswythe’s, includes a chapter by Bintley locating Eanswythe’s lost minster in the context of the medieval landscape. In 2020 work by the project team, local community members, CAT, Folkestone Museum; and Queen’s University Belfast, confirmed that the relics held in St Mary’s and St Eanswythe’s were ‘almost certainly’ those of Eanswythe, making them the only surviving remains of a member of the Kentish royal house and the earliest verified remains of an English saint. This discovery received widespread coverage including the BBC, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Daily Express and The Independent [5.6], taking this local community heritage project and the story of Eanswythe to a national audience.

Supporting creative practice and thinking, including bringing together practitioners and providing social connection during COVID-19 lockdowns. Overall’s *The Art of Walking* was used by artist Elspeth Penfold with the ‘Walking with The Waste Land’ research group, alongside T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, to prompt discussions about connections between landscape, walking and poetry, as part of the development of Turner Contemporary’s exhibition *Journeys with ‘The Waste Land’* (2018) [5.7a]. In 2017, Overall developed *Drift Deck*, playing cards used to encourage attitudinal and attentive walking by facilitating the seeking of sensory detail and introducing disruption [3.4] [3.5]. Penfold went on to use the *Drift Deck* at Churchfields Primary School, Bromley, Kent (2018) for a My Creative School project with over 100 members of the school community [5.7a]. Echoing *Drift Deck*, pupils ‘created a deck of creative challenge cards drawing on the principles of psychogeography’ which enabled the application of ‘creative approaches to rediscover the school environment’ [5.7b]. *Drift Deck* was also used as a development tool in projects by Stephen Donnelly who employed the deck to explore bereavement and grief as part of his performance project *Sore Thumbs* (2018), supported by the Arts Council

of Wales. Reflecting on the project, Donnelly comments how *Drift Deck* became part of the 'central framework' for explorations and 'a pivotal driver of re-correlating images, play, memory [...] we would pick out a few cards to derail or sensorially heighten our experience' [5.8].

During COVID lockdowns *Drift Deck* was developed by Overall into *Distance Drift*, distanced collaborative walking exploring landscape and environment, with participants following the hashtag #DistanceDrift to receive attentive and attitudinal walking prompts to be followed, indoors or out, in any location. The event began running weekly on Sundays at the beginning of April 2020, with individuals posting images related to prompts. Since its inception #DistanceDrift has attracted a regular following, with over 375,000 impressions of the hashtag on Twitter and 20,615 direct engagements (to Dec 2020); and has run in programmes of the Fourth World Congress of Psychogeography (Sept 2020), MargateNOW (Sept-Oct 2020), and CHAT 2020 festival of archaeology (Oct 2020), as part of *Sum Tyms Bytin Sum Tyms Bit*. Comments from participants not only highlight the creative benefits, but also the value of involvement against the background of the pandemic. They include: 'Distance drift has been a great anchor in this year adrift. It gets me up and looking, focused on my experience in the world not the abstractions which can be overwhelming'; 'I honestly look forward to it every week [...]; It has kept my mind alert, connected me to the world both urban and natural (the small things) outside of the lockdown home'; and 'I like the creativity of the #DistanceDrift prompts and the way I can interpret them to experience the city and landscape [...] everyone in the group interprets it a different way and we experience it and create together although we are apart.' [5.9a] In relation to participating in #DistanceDrift, Professor Dee Heddon (University of Glasgow) wrote in the project blog for the AHRC funded Walking Publics/Walking Arts: 'Walking with others, even if virtually, has helped. [...] I walk with a different attention and orientation, and my overly familiar streets are transformed and refreshed. Time passes quickly and I mostly walk with a smile on my face, amazed at those moments of serendipity and the downright uplifting quirkiness lurking round most corners. I don't participate in #DistanceDrift every Sunday, but when I am feeling particularly low or at a loose end, it helps get me out the house and I imagine myself walking in the company of strangers, finding new things in old places.' [5.9b]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 (a) *O What We Ben!* website <https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/owhatweben/> (b) pdf of collated feedback.

5.2 *O What We Ben!* on BBC Radio 3: *Being Human: The Lost Luggage Office, Ghosts and Warrior Poets* (2017) BBC Radio 3. 16 Nov 2017 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09dynj0> (Accessed: 4th January 2021). Extracts 2:18, 15:22 and 15:51.

5.3 Collated material from Overall's walking events.

5.4 Testimonial from Interpretation Manager (South East) at English Heritage.

5.5 (a) Heritage Lottery Final Project Report detailing project events and attendance (plus overview sheet) (b) Visitor feedback from *Finding Eanswythe* exhibition.

5.6 Collated press in relation to verification of Eanswythe's relics.

5.7 (a) Statement from Elspeth Penfold on her use of *The Art of Walking* and *Drift Deck*. *Drift Deck* used at Churchfields Primary Schools as part of *My Creative Schools* (b) My Creative Schools report *Unique approaches to school development priorities*. (quote page 12).

5.8 Use of *Drift Deck* by Stephen Donnelly here <https://sorethumbsswansea.wordpress.com/tag/performance/> and article of reflections by Donnelly on its use (quote page 3).

5.9 (a) Comments from #DistanceDrift participants (b) AHRC Walking Publics/Walking Arts blog <https://walkcreate.gla.ac.uk/2021/04/21/itchingtowalk/>