

Institution: University of York		
Unit of Assessment: 28 - History		
Title of case study: Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals: Transforming Understanding, Policy, Management, and Public Engagement in England's Largest Heritage Sector		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013-2020		
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:
Dr Dee Dyas	Director, Principal Investigator	1/1/2002 - present
Dr Louise Hampson	Research/Impact Officer (IO)	1/6/2009 - present
Dr John Jenkins	PDRA	1/9/2014 - present
Patrick Gibbs	Head of Technical Design	1/2/2003 - present
Geoff Arnott	Specialist/Digital Visualisation	1/2/2014 - 9/10/19
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013-December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research linking historic uses of cathedrals and visitor needs today, undertaken and disseminated through 3 AHRC-funded projects, has: 1. changed national strategy, policy and guidance emanating from the key institutions overseeing cathedrals, the flagships of England's largest built-heritage sector, welcoming 11 million visitors a year [Historic England, Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, Association of English Cathedrals]; 2. transformed attitudes towards audience engagement at over 40 cathedrals, resulting in significantly enhanced visitor experience through new policy (e.g. allowing photography for the first time and moving shops inside cathedrals), improved signage, retraining volunteers, and using the experiential dynamics of buildings more creatively; and 3. enhanced tourism strategy and management in Canterbury and instigated major national cultural celebrations related to the 2020 anniversaries of the death and translation of Thomas Becket (Becket and London 2020, and the 2020 Year of Cathedrals and Pilgrimage).</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>A. The AHRC-funded 'Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals, Past and Present' (PEC) (GBP997,038, PI Dyas) was undertaken by the Centre for the Study of Christianity & Culture (CSCC), from 2014-17. It examined engagement with four leading cathedrals, Canterbury, York, Durham and Westminster (providing varying historical, geographical, denominational, and social settings, and charging policies). Combining methodologies from history, theology, religious studies, and social sciences facilitated assessment of pilgrim and visitor interaction with sacred places from the 11th to the 21st centuries, analysis of responses to cathedrals as sacred/heritage/tourist sites today, and co-design of new ways to maximise visitor engagement.</p> <p>Eight overarching transformative themes were developed and embedded in practice:</p> <p>1. Recognition that great churches have always been multi-purpose sites, with many competing activities, embodying diverse meanings for multiple audiences [3.1, 3.2] and that cathedrals need to adapt and apply historic strategies to visitor engagement today [3.2]. In the 13th century, Durham Cathedral built an ambulatory to allow pilgrims access to St Cuthbert's shrine without disrupting monastic worship. Pilgrims were enfolded by music and incense, enriching experience and enhancing responsiveness, demonstrating the power of the phenomenon the research team designated 'adjacency' [3.2].</p> <p>2. Pilgrimage experience and engagement with sacred places have always been multifaceted, involving spiritual <i>and</i> tourism elements, and varying according to season, place, and individual needs. Visitors today still experience a wide range of (sometimes unanticipated) responses to spaces within a single visit. However, cathedral staff and volunteers often fail to recognise that all visitors are 'potential pilgrims,' frequently 'labelling' people on entry, pre-judging interests and responses, and failing to offer a full range of engagement activities to all [3.1, 3.2, 3.4].</p> <p>3. Medieval engagement with sacred places promoted experiences of healing and wellbeing and built community through shared experience [3.1]; these factors still matter to visitors today [3.2].</p> <p>4. Sacred buildings and choreographed movement around them were designed to communicate messages, shape experience, and stimulate a response [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6]. Research on the shrine of Thomas Becket, revealing the ways in which medieval pilgrim experience was enhanced [3.1,</p>		

3.2, 3.4], is embodied in ground-breaking digital visualisations [3.6]. In contrast, cathedrals today often fail to make spaces welcoming and engaging, while volunteers' desire to control visitors often inhibits or blocks movement and access; signage can also be unhelpful.

5. The centrality of sensory engagement (including movement) in creating response, emotion, memory, and transformation [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6]. Much of the rich environment created by images, altars, candles, and other visual, auditory and tactile stimuli was lost at the Reformation, but PEC conferences and pilot activities have helped cathedrals to increase sensory stimuli.

6. 'Takeaways', such as pilgrimage badges and relics, have always encapsulated experience, created memories, and supported sharing with others [3.1, 3.2, 3.3]. Photos (e.g. 'selfies') and items from cathedrals still carry great significance, especially if obtained inside the building [3.2].

7. Cathedrals have always needed to generate income, including medieval pilgrim offerings. Today Church of England (CofE) cathedrals are debating the desirability and effects of entry charges. The project studied two 'charging' (Canterbury and York) and two 'free entry' cathedrals (Durham and Westminster) in order to analyse the effects on visitor experience, revealing that the critical factor is not whether charges are levied but the quality of welcome and experience offered [3.2].

8. New popular interest in saints reveals opportunities for public engagement [3.1, 3.2], as in the case of Thomas Becket and his under-recognised links with London as patron saint [3.5].

B. The 'Becket Connection' AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement (GBP100,810, PI Dyas) used the 2020 anniversaries of Thomas Becket's death and translation as catalysts to transform heritage, tourism, education and community engagement, particularly in Canterbury and London. The research team created detailed 3D-visualisations of medieval Canterbury [3.6], showing the pilgrimage-inspired development of the city and the connectedness of the historic sites within a single narrative.

C. 'Engaging with Place and Managing Space' AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement (GBP100,735, PI Dyas) translated PEC outputs into new national policy, statutory guidance, management, and training, enhancing visitor engagement with historic churches.

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

3.1 Dyas, *The Dynamics of Pilgrimage: Christianity, Holy Places, and Sensory Experience* (Routledge, 2020).*+^

3.2 Dyas and Jenkins (eds), *Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals, past, present, and future* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Introduction and chapters: Dyas, 'The Role of Sensory Engagement with Place, Past and Present'; Jenkins & Bowman, 'Leaving and Taking Away: Cathedrals and Material Culture'; Jenkins and Coleman, 'The Multivalent Cathedral'. *+^

3.3 Dyas, 'To be a pilgrim: Tactile Piety, Virtual Pilgrimage and the Experience of Place in Christian Pilgrimage' in *Matter of Faith*, ed. J. Robinson, L. De Beer, A. Harnden (British Museum Press, 2015).*+^

3.4 Jenkins, 'Replication or rivalry? The 'Becketization' of pilgrimage in English cathedrals', *Religion* 49:1 (2019). DOI *^

3.5 Jenkins, 'St Thomas Becket and Medieval London', *History* 105:367 (2020). DOI *^

3.6 Arnott, Dyas, Gibbs, Hampson, Jenkins, Digital reconstructions: 1. animated recreations of medieval pilgrim experience at Canterbury Cathedral, replicating and assessing pilgrim sensory experience and interaction with spaces (2017); 2. 3D visualisation of Canterbury c. 1450 showing pilgrimage infrastructure and the relationship between buildings and pilgrim experience (2019). Available at <https://www.pilgrimageandcathedrals.ac.uk/outputs> ^

*=peer-reviewed publication; +=returned to REF2021; ^=produced with peer-reviewed funding

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

The research has shaped national policy, changed cathedral practice, reconfigured tourist strategy in Canterbury, and stimulated major national cultural activities and celebrations. The research was prompted by the worldwide growth in pilgrimage (200-300 million undertaking 'religious' pilgrimage annually); the social/economic importance of English historic churches to community wellbeing and tourism (with over 30 million visits per year); and the need of cathedrals to evolve new strategies to engage their growing and very diverse audiences.

1. RESHAPING NATIONAL POLICY, GUIDANCE, DECISION-MAKING AND PRACTICE

Changing understanding and decision-making The national organisations tasked with conservation, development and management of CofE cathedrals are: Cathedrals and Church

Buildings Division, the CoFE department advising churches and government on conservation matters (CCBD); Historic England (HE); the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, an independent panel of experts giving advice, evaluating and approving cathedral developments, and promoting best practice (CFCE); and the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC). All were partners in the AHRC-funded 'Pilgrimage and Cathedrals' and 'Place and Space' projects and have incorporated the research themes listed in 2A and 2C above into policy and practice. 'The research findings and collaboration have significantly changed understanding ... in particular changes to and development of strategy, policy and guidance documentation around the use and management of space ... and contributed significantly to real-world changes in cathedral attitudes and practice' [Director, CCBD, 5.1]. 'The research findings were ... "gold dust", enhancing our understanding of what may be permissible and desirable in cathedrals today, informing the statutory advice we give ... and shaping the new guidance. ... For example, we have recognised the value people place on having sale points within buildings ... This is a new insight for Historic England.' [Head of Places of Worship Strategy, 5.3]. 'The role of CFCE within the national church is to advise cathedrals on care, conservation, repair and development ... weighing proposals for change to ensure they are of a suitable quality and benefit. The findings of this research have provided us with a significant body of evidence to aid our understanding of the value and importance placed by people on these buildings and their experience of interacting with them. This has both influenced our thinking about how we approach proposals for change and has led to the development of a new CFCE national strategy' [Chair, CFCE, 5.2]. Related impacts include:

Co-production and publication of a major new national strategy for cathedrals which permanently embeds research findings into guidance on contemporary visitor needs, visitor engagement strategies, managing and enhancing the use of spaces in cathedrals, and planning future developments. "Developing Visitor Engagement in Cathedrals and Major Churches: Welcome, Worship, Mission, and Space Management" (December 2020: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Developing%20Visitor%20Engagement%20in%20Cathedrals.pdf>) 'embodies and applies key research findings' [Director CCBD, 5.1] and 'will now guide all cathedrals and major churches in their work and development of projects going forward' [Chair, CFCE, 5.2].

Co-production and publication of the first national Cathedral Volunteer Framework

The AEC (Deans; senior clergy and lay staff) has incorporated 2A and 2C research outcomes at all levels, inviting the PI to brief the Executive and successive AGMs; holding the first National Cathedrals Conference (2018) at which the PI/IO presented the research; actively disseminating research for cathedrals to use in strategic planning, and encouraging its embedding by use of CSCC as consultants [5.4]. Research findings have changed cathedrals' understanding of what visitors seek and identified critical training needs for volunteers, leading to AEC creating the first national Cathedral Volunteer Management Policy (December 2020), bringing 'consistency and rigour to the selection, training and management of volunteers ... You have enabled us to recognise, understand, interpret, and respond to visitor dynamics and this has been transformative' [AEC Director, 5.4].

2. CHANGES AT INDIVIDUAL CATHEDRAL LEVEL

The research was disseminated nationally and locally through conferences, detailed reports on Canterbury, Durham, Westminster, and York (available at www.pilgrimageandcathedrals.ac.uk) and the long-term embedding of research principles through consultancy, training, and heritage interpretation projects. As a direct result, cathedrals have implemented radical changes to policy and practice in visitor welcome/provision (including delivery of interpretative tools and activities and use of space), both at PEC partner cathedrals [5.5] and many others, including Coventry, Lichfield, Norwich, Ripon and St Davids [5.6]. Cathedrals have:

better understood the history, architecture, and experiential dynamics of buildings [research theme 2.A.4] e.g. **Lichfield** completed a GBP190,000 interpretation scheme with CSCC (2015-9), featuring pilgrimage past and present. The shop was moved into the cathedral, enhancing the meaning of 'takeaways' [5.6a]. The PI and IO are advising on the re-creation of the medieval Shrine of St Chad for the 21st century. 'It is no exaggeration to say all our plans for future use of our building have been designed to be entirely consistent with the CSCC research and the findings' [Dean of Lichfield, 5.6a].

opened up spaces/improved signage to encourage exploration and engagement [research themes 2.A.1; 2.A.4]. **Coventry** [5.6c], **Lichfield** [5.6a], **Ripon** [5.6d] and **York** [5.5c] are implementing changes to designation/use of spaces and signage as a result of project research.

trained staff and volunteers to treat all visitors in a more positive/open-ended way [research themes 2.A.2-3, 2.C] [5.4] e.g. **York** now treat 'all visitors as potential pilgrims' and use the project's final report as 'part of all inductions with new staff' [5.5c]. **Norwich**: 'We have drawn the research into our training of volunteers ... and shared it with other churches' [5.6b].

increased provision of sensory experience and interaction [research theme 2.A.4]; 'cathedrals have deployed the findings in ways which have significantly enriched visitor experience, through broadening responses to those who come through the doors, improving management of spaces and enhancing sensory engagement' [AEC, 5.4]. **Canterbury**: the research team co-devised a 12-station sensory pilgrim experience [5.5a]; **Lichfield**: introduced sensory engagement through new icons; candle lighting events attract thousands [5.6a]; **York**: held an interactive pilgrimage exhibition [5.5c].

embraced the value of 'adjacency' [research theme 2.A.1]. The concept of adjacency developed by the research team (encouraging visitors to explore the multiple sensory experiences which cathedrals offer in a flexible and gradual manner) has been widely adopted. 'The findings of this research have encouraged cathedrals to move services to more central locations so people can experience Evensong and other services more easily and accessibly. This has increased participation, especially amongst those who otherwise wouldn't feel confident about taking part and made the central function of the church more visible to school visits ... a significant change in practice which has enhanced both visitor management strategies and visitor experience' [Director, CCBD, 5.1]. **Norwich**: 'Our most significant change has been to relocate [weekday] services of Holy Communion from side chapels to our Nave' [leading to] 'a significant increase in the numbers coming forward to receive Communion... others sit or stand in other parts of the Nave, clearly valuing being able to share in the service for all or part of the time' [5.6b].

changed core policies on visitor interaction with buildings [research theme 2.A.6]. **Durham** previously banned photography, but the research report to the cathedral highlighted its value in capturing experience and perpetuating memory. In 2019, Durham announced a major policy reversal. 'The project's findings that photography, both "selfies" of someone being in the space and the opportunity to take a picture of a candle lit for someone and send it to them, was a deeply meaningful and spiritually-important part of the visitor experience, were very influential in the decision to reverse this policy' [Dean of Durham, 5.5b]. **Coventry**: Responding to the PEC research ('You have given us terms and concepts for what we could sense was happening but couldn't define so that we can now act' [Dean of Coventry, 5.6c]). Coventry Cathedral employed CSCC in 2019 to create their interpretation strategy for their application for City of Culture 2021. This incorporates key research findings on visitor needs and sensory engagement strategies [2.A:1-7], resulting in new approaches being implemented for 2020/21 [5.6c].

3. ENHANCING TOURISM STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH SHAPING CITYWIDE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS

CASE STUDY A: CANTERBURY Partners include the Cathedral, City Council, Museums Trust (CMT), Business Improvement District (BID), and Visit Canterbury.

A new historically-informed toolkit (the unique 3D-visualisations of medieval Canterbury [3.6]) has equipped partners to create a more integrated Canterbury tourism offer, enhancing the connections between the Cathedral, the City, and the rich multiplicity of heritage sites. From the Canterbury Cathedral CEO: 'The research led to the digital recreations, and those in turn gave us impressive, impactful new tools with the energising power to transform our engagement on many levels, now and in the future, with multiple partners in Canterbury and far beyond (including the city's civic, heritage, cultural and tourism authorities) ... These tools have fundamentally renewed how we tell our story to the millions, both from around the country and internationally, who visit this World Heritage Site, the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion' [5.5a]. From the Visit Canterbury Tourism Engagement Officer: 'This year we have developed a new marketing strategy and campaign, #OurCanterburyTales ... Having compelling visuals of the medieval city of Canterbury and the cathedral has helped inform this approach and is playing a key role in communications and messaging' [5.8]. From the Canterbury BID Chief Executive: 'The

aim of our Destination Management Plan is to make Canterbury “a first-class cultural heritage destination”, and the 'Becket Connection' resources help us achieve that. The project has been hugely beneficial for Canterbury’s cultural heritage offering and local collaboration’ [5.8].

Shaping the design, content and delivery of exhibitions/public engagement tools

Greater understanding of the sensory dynamics of medieval pilgrim experience (including animated digital recreations of pilgrims at Canterbury [3.6]) significantly influenced exhibition design, planning, and content development (since 2018). Partner outputs, shaped by and incorporating research material [2A-2C], include a permanent interpretation legacy (touchscreens, hand-held media guides, schools resources, web resource) at the Cathedral (part of the GBP24.7 million HLF-funded project [5.8]), and an exhibition on Becket and pilgrimage by Canterbury Museums Trust: ‘It has been invaluable to partner with the York team and receive current trusted research and knowledge on Becket which we have been able to reflect throughout our exhibition interpretation’ [CMT Programming & Collections Manager, 5.8].

CASE STUDY B: LONDON Major London institutions were prompted to stage significant cultural celebrations (2020-21) celebrating Becket's influence on the city and its landscape, 'entirely as a result of the research and initiatives undertaken by Dr Dee Dyas and her colleagues' [Becket and London 2020 Committee Chair, 5.9] [3.5]. CSCC initiated, informed and coordinated the London 2020 Committee leading to the 'catalysing effects of the research undertaken by the team on Becket's relationship with London and of the resulting educational and cultural initiatives highlighting Becket's London roots and legacies' [City Remembrancer, 5.9]. **Key elements include:** **1. Lecture/recital hosted by the Mercers** ('thanks to [the] imaginative and thorough research ... the Mercers' Company was able to commemorate suitably its association with St Thomas' life and achievements [through] not only a spectacular and memorable event ... but lasting and educational legacies of his work' [Former Master, Mercers' Company, 5.9]. **2. Online resource** www.thebecketstory.org.uk (drawing on [3.5, 3.6]) with digital reconstructions, a new digital map of medieval London, History, RE, Literature, and Citizenship teaching resources (Sample feedback: 'I used your Becket website for teaching KS3. The lesson resources etc ... are great. The kids loved exploring the site and I gave them a whole hour to use it' [5.9]); **3. British Museum exhibition:** Between 2017 and late 2020 'Project research, together with the vivid detailed digital 3D visualisations ... contributed significantly to the planning, design and content of the upcoming major exhibition at the British Museum on Thomas Becket' [Head of Research, 5.7]; **4. Museum of London Exhibition:** 'new research fed into the online content and ...helped us refine and enhance gallery captions and individual object records' [Medieval Curator, 5.9].

YEAR OF CATHEDRALS & PILGRIMAGE 2020-21. The research led to a second major initiative - a new national culture/tourism campaign launched in response to 'the excitement generated' by CSCC research' [AEC, 5.4], showcasing cathedrals as places of shared heritage, celebration, commemoration, and community identity. Each cathedral is staging new engagement events including 'Cathedrals at Night'. The PI/IO co-planned national training conferences for cathedral staff and presented research themes 2.A.1-7. Impacts include changed visitor strategies, new activities, and a national Pilgrim Passport [5.4]. The PI serves on the National Executive and National Cathedrals Committee. 'Covid has necessitated the deferral of several events to next year but the policy impacts generated [by the research] ...have enabled cathedrals to respond to these challenges in creative, imaginative and (most importantly) people-centred ways' [AEC, 5.4].

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

5.1 Testimonial, Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division (Director).

5.2 Testimonial, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (Chair).

5.3 Testimonial, Historic England (Head of Policy for Places of Worship).

5.4 Testimonial, Association of English Cathedrals (Executive Director).

5.5 Testimonials from Pilgrimage and Cathedrals Project Case Study Cathedrals: **a)** Canterbury Cathedral; **b)** Durham Cathedral; **c)** York Minster.

5.6 Testimonials from Cathedrals: **a)** Lichfield; **b)** Norwich; **c)** Coventry; **d)** Ripon; **e)** St Davids.

5.7 Testimonial, British Museum (Head of Research).

5.8 Testimonial, Canterbury City Councillor and Heritage Champion on behalf of City Council, Visit Canterbury, Canterbury Museums Trust, Canterbury BID.

5.9 Combined testimonial: City of London Corporation; Becket and London 2020 Committee Chair; Museum of London; and Mercers Company.