

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Reading		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Literature		
Title of case study: Safeguarding, enriching and enabling literary archives through sub-Saharan African case studies and copyright law		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2018		
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:
Dr David Sutton	Research Director	01/01/95 - 31/12/18
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>David Sutton is at the forefront of archival best practice and his pioneering work ensures the safety of literary archives at risk. Literary archives are often at greater risk of loss or destruction than other centrally held records which are protected by legislation and strict archiving practice. Sutton's work has influenced the way literary and personal papers are housed, catalogued and accessed, and is guiding copyright law throughout the world. At an international level he advises and collaborates with organisations including UNESCO, swisspeace and PEN (Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists, Novelists) International and at a national level he has influenced practice in sub-Saharan African archives (Namibia, Malawi and Cameroon). Sutton has introduced ideas such as "the politics of location", "split collections" and "appropriate archival home" to international collecting practices. He has caused institutions in richer countries to reflect upon the ethics of their collecting policies while encouraging archivists in less economically developed countries to believe they can and should be building such collections.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Sutton's research traces and analyses the formation of, and issues around, literary archives: What are they? Where are they and where should they be maintained? Who has access to them, and under what terms? His research locates and creates awareness around particular archives and is also research-as-practice. Sutton has actively guided governments and international bodies as they recognise the value of their own resources and design archiving policies (outputs 1-6). Sutton has been editing the <i>Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters</i>, which is a British Academy research project, since 1982 and his work continues to build on the University of Reading's strong reputation for its collections-based research in literary and publishers' archives.</p> <p>Sutton is a director of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network (DLAN) which was founded in 2012. DLAN, funded by a Leverhulme Trust International Network grant, is led by the University of Reading, with partners in France, Italy, Namibia, Trinidad & Tobago and the USA, and supported by the British Library, International Council on Archives (ICA) and UNESCO. The Network promotes international collaboration in the preservation of, and access to, literary archives. It has brought together a group of established scholars and experts from a variety of institutional backgrounds, and across different disciplines and regions, to initiate a context in which to practice and scrutinise methodological and conceptual frameworks. The network has held various workshops and lectures since 2012 from which publications have arisen. Five well-attended international workshops were held between 2012 and 2014, in the UK, Italy, France, Trinidad and Tobago and the USA. Further workshops, with special focus on literary manuscripts in an African context, have followed in Namibia in 2015 and Cameroon in 2018. DLAN's activities formed the basis for two important publications in 2018, both edited by David Sutton (outputs 2 and 3).</p>		

Alongside his own publications and work as a director for DLAN, Sutton has written forward-working papers and guidelines in collaboration with external partners such as The National Archives (TNA), the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts (GLAM), the Society of Authors (SoA), UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (outputs 1, 2, 4 and 5). Sutton is now a consultant advising on literary archives and location registers for the Leverhulme funded project “Caribbean Literary Heritage: Recovering the Lost Past and Safeguarding the future” (2017-2021) which is a successor to the Caribbean Literary Archives strand led by Professor Alison Donnell (formerly University of Reading, now at the University of East Anglia).

3. References to the research

Sutton’s research has introduced the concept of split collections in literary archiving practice, changing how literary archives catalogue their collections and influencing changes in how copyright law is applied in a literary archive setting. The research meets or exceeds the threshold for 2*: it has been published in peer-reviewed professional journals and provides an important point of reference, influencing archive practices and policies nationally and internationally.

1. Sutton, DC (2019). “*Background Paper on Archives and Copyright*”. *World Intellectual Property Organization, SCCR 38* CentAUR ID: <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/88376/>
2. Sutton DC (2018). “*Literary Archives in Africa; an overview with examples of recent initiatives*”, *African Research & Documentation* 133 (2018), pp. 3-13. CentAUR ID: <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/88375/>
3. Sutton DC & Livingstone A, eds (2018): *The future of literary archives: diasporic and dispersed collections at risk*. Kalamazoo; Bradford: Arc Humanities Press,. ISBN 9781942401575
4. Sutton DC, (ed) (2018) Special “Literary archives” issue of *Comma; Journal of the International Council on Archives*, 2017-1 including Jens Boel and David C. Sutton, “*Archives at risk: addressing a global concern*”. CentAUR ID: <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/88372/>
5. Sutton DC (2014). “*The destinies of literary manuscripts: past, present and future.*” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42 (3), pp. 295-300. ISSN 0157-6895 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2014.948559>
6. Sutton DC (2016). ‘*The Diasporic Literary Archives Network and the Commonwealth: Namibia, Nigeria, Trinidad & Tobago and other examples.*’ *New review of Information Networking* 21 (1), pp. 37-51. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614576.2016.1234830>

4. Details of the impact

A. Impact on policy: literary archives at risk and creating safe havens

In contrast to public record offices, which are protected by a legal superstructure, literary archives are often at greater risk of loss or destruction despite their richness and diversity. Sutton’s expertise is sought-after internationally. He has provided advice and guidance to agencies throughout the world as increasing numbers of archives are at risk. In particular, his work is ensuring that literary archives and diaspora form an integral part of discussion in the archive and library sector. This is vital if these valuable resources are to be protected. In the UK and Europe the dialogue is centred on why practice should change, particularly ethically, whilst in sub-Saharan Africa the dialogue is around how to change things in a practical way. Sutton has presented his work in this wide-ranging activity at important archival and scholarly meetings in Europe, East Asia, Africa and South America. For example, he was invited to speak at the International Council on Archives Annual Conferences in Mexico City, Mexico in November 2017 and in Yaoundé, Cameroon in November 2018.

Sutton’s research and expertise has been deeply influential in changing priorities within the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme. The programme originally focussed on recording well-known treasures, but as a result of guidance from Sutton and DLAN it is now working towards preserving archives at risk. In 2016 Sutton was appointed as a corresponding member of UNESCO’s Sub-Committee on Education and Research (SCEaR) and DLAN was invited to present on closer working with UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme, International Comparative Literature Association Conference in Vienna (July 2016, E1).

Sutton is one of only two individual expert members of the UNESCO-supported project Safe Havens for Archives at Risk. In 2016 swisspeace led an expert working group on archives at risk, as part of the UNESCO project. Sutton was invited to be a facilitator and led the discussions on planning a way forward. He is an author of the group's professional standards document: *Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk* which has now been adopted by the International Council on Archives (E2).

B. Impact on archivists and archives in sub-Saharan Africa

Sutton has played a significant part in protecting archives in sub-Saharan Africa. Two countries have invited him to advise on their future practice, both for archives at risk, and literary and personal papers (E3). In 2015, as representative of DLAN, Sutton ran a two-day conference in Namibia. The conference was attended by archivists, writers, authors, estate-holders and representatives of the Namibian government. Sutton ran many of the workshops, where delegates discussed why cultural archives are important for new collecting countries; specifics of collecting in Namibia and advice on working with authors/estates. One of the outcomes of the conference was the National Archives of Namibia, beginning their debut programme of collecting personal and literary papers (E4).

In 2017 Sutton spoke about the work in Namibia at a conference in Malawi and offered to facilitate and advise on work in similar archives. This led to a project focussing on one Malawian author. Another two-day workshop was run by Sutton in 2018 in Cameroon. It inspired a group of archive students to apply to the Fund for International Development in Archives (FIDA) for a project to visit authors around Cameroon to ask about their papers. Sutton supported the successful application and the resulting 15,000 Euros grant made it possible for the students to travel around the country digitising documents. This is now regarded as a model practice for the future. A report from February 2018 states "When we had the workshop with David Sutton there was nothing being collected of this nature in Cameroon at all. We now have thirty archival collections in the National Archives." These include an important piece of Cameroonian literature – Pabe Mongo's *The Journal of Wamakoul*, a journal created during the writing of *L'Homme de la Rue* – which is now in the National Archive (E5).

Namibia and Cameroon present examples of African countries with no previous tradition of collecting literary archives. But, following interventions and solidarity work from Sutton and the DLAN, they began building such collections – with clear recognition, now, that literary archives and other personal papers form as much a part of a country's cultural heritage as museum artefacts (E6). There are plans to expand the project. Kenya and Tanzania are both actively interested in creating their own literary archives, using templates established at Sutton's workshops in Namibia and Cameroon.

C. Impact on authors and archives

Sutton's work as a director of DLAN has led to recognition that current authors wishing to dispose of their literary archives need clear guidance on how to do this in the interest of national heritage. This has resulted in a collaboration with TNA, the Society of Authors and the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts, who together have produced the working document *Authors & Their Papers*. The final document is widely available, endorsed by the National Archives and approved by the Society of Authors and is now a professional standard within the international archival sector (E7).

D. Influencing international copyright law and archives

In January 2019 Sutton was invited to be the representative and adviser on archives to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) General Assembly – a group of approximately 190 country members who comprise a world-wide assembly modelled on the United Nations (E8). Sutton's knowledge of the challenges facing archives – such as copyright issues (for personal and literary papers in particular) and identifying where urgent preservation copies are needed to protect archives – has changed the organisation's approach to archives. To achieve this, Sutton produced *A Background Paper on the Intersection of Archives and Copyright* which summarised the nature of archives and the way they intersect with copyright legislation. This has the potential

to change the way archives are created across the world, especially in low and middle income countries where funds cannot stretch to excessive copyright fees. One copyright expert from Cornell University and Harvard University commented: “Sutton has done the impossible. In the twenty pages in this background paper prepared for the last meeting of [WIPO, ...] Sutton's descriptive work illustrates wonderfully how copyright rules developed for a commercial environment can hinder the work of memory institutions” (E9).

E. Impact on UK archival sector: influencers on international archive sector

Sutton is also influencing the UK archival sector; raising awareness of their influence on and possible collaborations with international archives that can benefit from knowledge exchange and sharing best practice between established and fledgling organisations. For example, Sutton was the keynote speaker on “The Politics of Location Worldwide” at the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) Conference in October 2017.

Sutton’s research has enabled the protection of literary archives and is transforming archiving practice in the UK, Europe and Africa through interventions which have enabled literary archives to be created for the first time; changed how archives engage with authors and copyright law and facilitated knowledge exchange between the UK archive sector and the rest of the world.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [E1] Sutton’s appointment to UNESCO sub-committee and DLAN presentation at UNESCO
- [E2] Adoption and endorsement of Sutton’s *Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk*
- [E3] Impact on policy and procedure in sub-Saharan African archives
- [E4] Testimonial from Chair of FIDA
- [E5] Cameroon Archives Project
- [E6] Testimonial regarding Namibia Literary Archives Project
- [E7] Use and endorsement of *Authors and their Papers*
- [E8] Sutton’s appointment as a representative of WIPO and WIPO testimonials
- [E9] Testimonial from a copyright expert at Cornell University