

Institution: Cardiff University		
Unit of Assessment: History (28)		
Title of case study: Changing practice on critical remembrance at Historic Royal Palaces		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Jenny Kidd	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Reader	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 20/09/2012-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/08/2013 – 31/07/2020		
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>UK museums and heritage sites are required to negotiate complex public debates, particularly around the remembrance of traumatic or politically sensitive historical events. Cardiff research found that heritage sites often failed to fully engage with the political, societal and cultural legacies of conflict, or to critically reflect on their commemoration and remembrance activity. The research changed Historic Royal Palaces' (HRP) practices around remembrance. By working with HRP, as it developed the 'Why Remember?' learning programme (2014 -2018) to run alongside remembrance installations at the Tower of London, Cardiff research enabled the organisation to engage new audiences in commemoration. It also developed HRP's research culture and narrative beyond curatorial research, which formed a vital part of their successful application to become an Independent Research Organisation in 2015.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Museums and heritage sites are at the centre of negotiating complex, controversial, and very public debates around legacies of conflict and commemoration. Representing commemorative events critically, along with the need to engage more diverse public audiences, creates ethical challenges for these institutions and a need to break from traditional forms of heritage. In the run-up to the First World War centenary, Kidd explored how commemoration should be handled critically, and how heritage institutions could be supported to do this.</p> <p>Kidd was Co-Investigator on UK-wide AHRC collaborations about heritage and memory [G3.1, 2012], and the significance of centenaries [G3.2, 2013]. She also co-led the commemoration strand of the Voices of War and Peace WW1 Engagement Centre alongside Dr Joanne Sayner [G3.3, 2014], and co-founded the 'Challenging History' network which explored how remembrance of sensitive and traumatic historical events should be handled in practice. Kidd's distinct contribution to these research teams included an interdisciplinary approach to museums and heritage studies, and methodological expertise on social scientific research methods.</p> <p>2.1 Research findings</p> <p>The Silence, Memory and Empathy Network [G3.1] explored how silence, empathy and memory interact in museums and at historic sites, with Kidd contributing particular expertise on digital heritage approaches. Building on this, the Significance of the Centenary network [G3.2] hosted by Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), and involving heritage practitioners and academics, reflected on anniversary cultures, why we remember, and the significance of marking a centenary. A key strand of the Network's activity was exploring the ways heritage organisations planned to mark the WW1 centenary in order to interrogate exactly who is now remembering for whom, with Kidd leading work to analyse the social media debate around the Centenary to inform discussions.</p> <p>Major research findings stemming from both networks were further explored through Kidd's contribution to i) the Voices of War and Peace Engagement Centre [G3.3] and ii) her co-edited</p>		

volume on difficult, contested and sensitive heritages in a range of museum contexts [3.1]. Key findings include:

- museum cultures are characterised by inertia and conservatism, the perception of which often renders staff reluctant to take risks or to challenge the norms of their institutions [3.1, 3.2]. These trends are amplified during periods of austerity requiring a retreat into core business [3.3]. This makes diversifying museum approaches and narratives an extremely challenging proposition;
- institutions can be especially risk-averse in their approaches to commemoration and remembrance activity [3.1], both of which have been high on the cultural agenda with the centenary of WW1 [3.4]. This risk-aversion – rooted in the political, social and cultural sensitivities around commemoration and remembrance – leads to a privileging of traditional forms of remembrance, such as uncritical exhibits focussed on war memorials or the poppy.

These research findings informed HRP's work on the 'Why Remember?' programme accompanying Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, a major art installation which saw the Tower of London's moat filled with 888,246 ceramic poppies (2014). The installation also toured a further 19 iconic sites across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Kidd's reflections on that body of work, and the data it produced, led to a further research finding which was explored with additional work alongside the development, running, and evaluation of the HRP installation 'Beyond the Deepening Shadows' (2018). This installation of flames in the Tower moat was designed to coincide with the end of the First World War Centenary commemorations. Kidd's research found that:

- attempts to disrupt traditional remembrance practices and cultures are fraught with complexity, not least when working with a symbol as potent as the poppy [3.4, 3.5]. The research developed the term 'unthinking remembrance' to describe the way in which remembrance work often channels broader narratives about war but fails to critically engage with the political, societal and cultural legacies of conflict [3.4].

The research revealed key underlying challenges facing museums when trying to diversify their audience base and plan commemorative activity. Through the Network activity with HRP, the research also highlighted strategies for new professional literacies which could overcome 'unthinking remembrance' to create more meaningful, personal and emotional responses to commemoration [3.4].

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

[3.1] Kidd, J., Cairns, S., Drago, A., Ryall, A., and Stearn, M. 2016. Challenging History in the Museum. 2nd edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Available from HEI on request.

[3.2] Kidd, J. 2019. Unprecedented times? Shifting press perceptions on museums and activism. In: R. Janes and R. Sandell (eds.) *Museums and Activism*. Oxon: Routledge. Available from HEI on request.

[3.3] Kidd, J. 2017. Debating contemporary museum ethics: reporting Sekhemka. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23(6), pp. 493-505. DOI:10.1080/13527258.2017.1287119

[3.4] Kidd, J. and Sayner, J. 2018. Unthinking remembrance? Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red and the significance of centenaries. *Cultural Trends*. 27(2), pp. 68-82. DOI:10.1080/09548963.2018.1453448. Available in REF2.

[3.5] Kidd, J. and Sayner, J. 2019. Intersections of silence and empathy in heritage practice. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(1), pp. 1-4. DOI:10.1080/13527258.2018.1475414

Selected grants:

[G3.1] Sayner J., Kidd, J. (Col), Silence, Memory and Empathy in Museums and at Historic Sites AHRC network, January 2012-December 2013 (moved to Cardiff from 20/09/2012), £21,495, AH/I022430/1

[G3.2] Sayner J. and Kidd, J. (Col), Significance of the Centenary AHRC network, February 2013-May 2014, £22,136, AH/K005413

[G3.3] Grosvenor I., Kidd, J. (Col), Voices of War and Peace: the great war and its legacy, AHRC WW1 Engagement Centre, January 2014-April 2018, £596,228, AH/L008149/, and Voices of War and Peace: Core Centre Continuation, January 2017-March 2020, £616,716, AH/P006698/1

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

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) cares for some of Britain's most iconic heritage sites including the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, and Kensington Palace. Kidd's research and collaborative work with HRP supported the organisation to embed robust ways of negotiating remembrance and commemoration. This led to changes in HRP's approach to remembrance work; generated new ways of thinking that influenced creative practice and engaged more diverse audiences through the 'Why Remember?' programme; and developed HRP's research culture.

4.1 Changing Historic Royal Palaces' practice around remembrance

Kidd's research, via the Significance of the Centenary network, was used by HRP in their plans to commemorate the 2014 centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. The research supported Alex Drago (Explorer Manager in HRP's Learning and Engagement Team) to develop the 'Why Remember?' learning programme, which HRP states was *"designed specifically to engage our audiences in a meaningful discussion about First World War remembrance and by so doing, transform their relationship to it"* [5.1, p.78]. The programme of interactive events and initiatives accompanied the 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' installation, which featured more than 800,000 ceramic poppies in the Tower of London moat from July to November 2014.

Drago used the research to formulate three questions which underpinned the programme. He stated: *"The 'Significance of the Centenary' Network was crucially important in informing the Why Remember? approach. It was as a result of this experience that I formulated three questions... 'Why should we remember the war?', 'Why are 100 years so significant?' and 'How do you want to remember?'"* [5.2].

These questions aimed to *"diversify or disrupt the white middle class military view of remembrance which is so often the default for heritage institutions, including HRP"* and to help visitors to develop a personalised approach to remembrance, regardless of their background [5.2]. Highlighting Kidd's input, Drago stated that the research allowed him to *"make the case within HRP for a more dynamic and less didactic programme to accompany the poppies installation, one that would seek to provoke personal, and even transformational, engagement with the idea of remembrance"* [5.2].

'Why Remember?' ran from August-November 2014 and reached over 1.25M people worldwide [5.2]. This included:

- adult learning talks and workshops to 128 people [5.3];
- community engagement including animation workshops in Tower Hamlets [5.2] and reminiscence work in Blackfriars residential home [5.3];
- activities for children and young people including object-handling, story-telling and costume interpretation with 2,500 people; a theatre performance with 500 young people, and a family trail undertaken by over 10,000 people [5.3]. Drago highlighted a broadcast on the Discovery Channel on 10 November 2014, which *"used the three questions to engage students and support teachers in the associated professional development programme"* and reached 1 million students in 61 countries [5.2].

'Why Remember?' *"was especially important for HRP because it helped non-traditional and younger audiences engage with the centenary"* and *"promoted stronger and more connected communities...by developing an appreciation of the sacrifices of all those who lived during the First World War"* [5.2].

Drago further noted that asking people how they want to remember was important *“for younger and/or more diverse audiences who have no family connection to the war but who want to participate in and/or create remembrance activities that are meaningful to them and their communities”* [5.2]. A national heritage sector publication ‘Museums and Heritage Advisor’ noted that the programme *helped “thousands of...visitors to better understand the significance of the First World War commemorations”* [5.4].

4.2 Embedding Historic Royal Palaces’ new approach to commemoration

‘Why Remember?’ was so successful that its approach was used again by HRP in November 2018 for ‘Beyond the Deepening Shadows’, an installation of flames in the Tower moat to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. [Text redacted] confirmed that [text redacted] [5.5]. As the project film developed by HRP notes, this encouraged audiences to question whether commemorations could be limiting, what kind of emotions are produced through collective remembering, and what the political dimensions of remembrance are [5.6].

The research also influenced decision-making and planning around the new ‘Beyond the Deepening Shadows’ installation. [Text redacted] stated: [text redacted] [5.5]. Initially conceptualised as an artistic piece, [text redacted] used the findings about the earlier installation to show that audiences would likely view it as a commemoration instead. [Text redacted] noted that this [text redacted] [5.5].

The three ‘Why Remember?’ questions – informed by the Cardiff research [3.1] – were used to develop a survey which captured 3,588 public responses between 2014-2018. These showed that the ‘Why Remember?’ programme, developed with the aim of creating more meaningful responses to commemoration, had elicited personal and emotional responses [5.1]:

- *“It is only at 100 years that we can truly put it into perspective. Here is the tipping point where the myths are already rooted and now it has become a story for the telling of other stories. Now is the time we can take another look at those myths, and reclaim the other stories which have been pushed to the sidelines”;*
- *“I want to remember BOTH sides in this conflict. I am very concerned that the remarkable and moving poppy installation is only counting the losses on the British/Commonwealth side. To only remember those lost on this side, rather than also all those that WE killed, does not demonstrate any degree of humanity and reconciliation”;*
- *“I never knew my grandparents, my mother never saw her father as he was at the western front and died there, we are the last generation to really feel the effect of losing our loved ones and the consequences [sic] of it. The centenary of the war is a great time and the last time our generation have of passing on the truth, the stories, the horrors and senselessness of it to the next generations”.*

4.3 Developing the research culture and narrative at Historic Royal Palaces

The ‘Why Remember?’ programme led to [text redacted] [5.5]. ‘Why Remember?’ encouraged the department to think critically about their outreach and work with audiences, and to recognise the research value of their work [5.5]. Research at HRP had previously been focussed on market research and quantitative data, but Kidd’s work brought new ideas to the department about content analysis, critical discourse analysis, research ethics and theoretical thinking [5.5]. This led to the department beginning [text redacted], with [text redacted] confirming that [text redacted] [5.5].

For example, visitor postcards from a Queen Victoria exhibition at Kensington Palace offered potentially useful qualitative data, but there was a lack of knowledge in the department about how best to use and handle this wealth of information [5.5]. Based on [text redacted] proposed qualitative research methods to help them move beyond a basic sentiment analysis and assess this more in depth [5.5]. The support from Kidd to develop new approaches [text redacted] and [text redacted] [5.5].

This change in approach to research contributed to HRP’s successful application for Independent Research Organisation status in 2015, which HRP’s Head of Research, Wendy

Hitchmough, described as a “*huge milestone*” [5.4]. ‘Why Remember?’ was integral to the application [5.2] as evidence of research capacity and [text redacted] [5.5].

Drago confirmed the importance of the programme in the application as it “*helped to develop a new approach, that placed considerably greater emphasis on the audience itself and how they make sense of the past, rather than presenting a traditional narrative through an exhibition and expecting the public to make sense of them. These are approaches that are underdeveloped across the sector and yet clearly have considerable potential to change how we engage with the past*” [5.2].

HRP’s new status opened up many opportunities for practitioners [5.2] as it allowed HRP to apply for research funding which they had previously not been able to apply for. HRP has since been awarded five grants as Principal Investigator, totalling over £407,000, on subjects including Tudor dwellings, Henry VIII’s palaces, and Queen Victoria’s royal image [5.7]. [Text redacted] [5.8] [text redacted].

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

[5.1] Kidd, J. and Sayner, J. 2018. Unthinking remembrance? Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red and the significance of centenaries. *Cultural Trends*. 27 (2), pp. 68-82.

[5.2] Testimonial: Alex Drago, former Explorer Manager, Learning and Engagement Team, Historic Royal Palaces

[5.3] AHRC Significance of the Centenary Outcomes Report

[5.4] ‘Historic Royal Palaces awarded Independent Research Organisation status’, Museums and Heritage Advisor, August 2015

[5.5] [Text redacted]

[5.6] Film: ‘Why Remember? WWI centenary and public commemoration at the Tower of London’, October 2019

[5.7] UKRI grants awarded to Historic Royal Palaces

[5.8] [Text redacted]