Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Knowledge Transfer Fellowships PROPOSAL

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Knowledge Transfer Fellowships (Open Call)

Organisation where the Fellowship would be held

Organisation	Swansea University	Research Organisation Reference:	Chester KT 2010
Division or Department	School of Arts		

Title of Proposed Research [up to 150 chars]

Discover Medieval Chester: place, heritage and identity

Start Date and Duration

a. Proposed start date	01 January 2012	b. Duration of the grant (months)	18

Applicants

Role	Name	Organisation	Division or Department	How many hours a week will the investigator work on the project?
Fellow	Dr Catherine Clarke	Swansea University	School of Arts and Humanities	8
Co-Investigator	Dr Keith Lilley	Queen's University of Belfast	Geography Archaeology and Palaeoecology	2.98
Co-Investigator	Mr Paul Vetch	King's College London	Centre for Computing in the Humanities	2.98

Objectives

List the main objectives of the proposed research in order of priority [up to 4000 chars]

Through partnership between academics and local and regional stakeholders, 'Discover Medieval Chester' aims to make the vibrant, multi-cultural heritage of medieval Chester more visible and accessible to both residents and visitors alike. 'Discover Medieval Chester' will share the innovative, high-quality research generated by the AHRC-funded 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project (www.medievalchester.ac.uk), together with other related scholarship, with wider audiences, to promote the rich medieval heritage of the city of Chester. Drawing together material, textual and visual culture and forging connections between the medieval past and the modern urban environment today, the project identifies quantifiable cultural, social and economic benefits which this knowledge transfer partnership will achieve.

The project's key objectives are:

* To connect the medieval and modern city of Chester and bring together textual, visual and material culture to allow wider audiences to explore the city's medieval heritage
* To promote the city's rich medieval heritage, in terms of its surviving physical fabric, museum collections and multi-lingual textual culture, which is currently neglected in comparison with its Roman history
* To share the innovative research on place and identity produced by the 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project (and related scholarship), promoting an understanding of medieval Chester as a dynamic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual city on the border of England and Wales
* To enable audiences to explore historical and contemporary issues of place, identity and community
* To build on the productive partnership with the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, established through the 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project, as well as liaising with other organisations in north-west England and North Wales
* To produce new resources and experiences for diverse user constituencies (including local communities, tourists and remote 'virtual visitors'), including a new interactive website with multi-media resources and customisable city tours, a major exhibition at the Grosvenor Museum and later Wrexham Museum, events and educational activities, and public art commissioned to represent and 'signpost' the multi-cultural heritage of medieval Chester in a prominent, engaging way
* To work with non-HEI partners to achieve quantifiable, sustainable cultural, social and economic benefits for the Cheshire and North Wales area
* To take advantage of the timeliness of this project, drawing on opportunities for matched funding, council support and intersection with other current activities in the city, as well as influencing local heritage policy and decision-making

Summary

Describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience [up to 4000 chars]. Note that this summary may be published on the AHRC's website in the event that a grant is awarded

The city of Chester has a rich medieval heritage. The legacies of this are present today in the city's surviving townscape, in its museum collections, and in the remarkable body of medieval multi-lingual literature which reflects the experiences of diverse cultural and ethnic communities within this dynamic borderland city. Yet in comparison with the city's Roman past, Chester's medieval past is currently an under-used cultural and economic asset, and is given relatively little visibility in local museums, in resources for visitors, in tourism marketing, and in the urban environment itself. 'Discover Medieval Chester' aims to promote the vibrant cultural heritage of medieval Chester as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual city, drawing together material, textual and visual culture and forging connections between the medieval past and the modern urban environment today.

In particular, 'Discover Medieval Chester' will share the innovative recent research produced by the AHRC-funded 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project (www.medievalchester.ac.uk). This project brought together a new digital atlas of the city c.1500, interlinked with newly-edited editions of medieval textual 'mappings' of the city in English, Latin and Welsh, showing how different cultural and ethnic communities interacted and configured the urban space around them in different ways. Together with relevant research produced by other scholars, this new work enables us to better understand place and identity in the medieval city, and to recover the experiences of individuals and communities in medieval Chester.

'Discover Medieval Chester' is founded on a partnership between the Knowledge Transfer Fellow, the wider academic team and the Grosvenor Museum, Chester - a productive relationship which was piloted during the 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project, when c.1200 people attended events coordinated by the Museum to celebrate the launch of the project research. Together with the Grosvenor Museum and other cultural and arts stakeholders in Cheshire and North Wales, we have defined ways in which our research can make a significant and lasting contribution to the wider community, achieving quantifiable social, cultural and economic benefits. We have also identified opportunities to intersect with other ongoing projects in the region in order to secure matched funding, local government support, and the chance to contribute to heritage policy and decision-making.

The 'Discover Medieval Chester' partnership will produce new resources and experiences for diverse user constituencies including local communities, tourists and remote 'virtual visitors'. Our aim is to re-vitalise interest in Chester's medieval heritage, promote education and tourism potentials, and enable audiences to explore issues of place, identity and community.

The academic research on Chester's multi-cultural medieval heritage will be disseminated via six key outputs:

1. A new interactive website centred on an interactive map of medieval Chester, overlaid onto the modern city. A set of audio-visual resources (including short guides, excerpts of medieval texts, and sample medieval artefacts with descriptions) will be attached to each key location or feature, allowing users to explore the medieval city and the different cultural perspectives within it, and to download customisable, 'bespoke' tours in MP3 format
2. Traditional paper tour brochures in a range of languages, including Welsh
3. A major exhibition at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, which will transfer to Wrexham Museum and later become a smaller, permanent exhibition in Chester
4. A piece of public art commissioned to represent and 'signpost' the medieval heritage of Chester in a prominent, engaging way
5. Events and educational activities in Chester and Wrexham
6. A workshop on knowledge transfer and partnerships between HEIs and the heritage sector, to be held at Swansea University

Outputs

The main outputs of the research

Performance, film or recording
Exhibition or installation
Artefact, work of art
Interactive website
Expertise gained through the application of research in a non-academic environment
Other (please specify)
If Other,
Knowledge Transfer workshop

Ethical Information

Are there ethical implications arising from the proposed research ?	No

Provide details of what they are and how they would be addressed [up to 1000 characters]

Does the institution have a policy on good conduct in research?	Yes

Details of where the policy can be accessed
http://www.ukrio.org/sites/ukrio2/the_programme_of_work/code_of_practice_for_research.cfm

Academic Beneficiaries

Describe who will benefit from the research [up to 4000 chars].

As an application through the 'Knowledge Transfer Fellowship' scheme, this project does not specifically seek to generate new research, but aims instead to develop a productive partnership between the academic team and the non-HEI organisations involved, so that high-quality, innovative research can achieve a lasting impact beyond the scholarly community. However, the project will generate benefits to the academic community in a number of significant ways.

Project Team

The academic staff named in the project team will benefit in the following ways:
* The project creates opportunities to share research with wider audiences, achieving higher impact and generating interest beyond the academy
* Conversations with non-HEI partners will challenge and nuance the ways in which we think about our research and its dissemination
* We will be challenged to devise new strategies and idioms for communicating our research, according to the needs of different user constituencies
* Through partnership with the Grosvenor Museum and other heritage organisations, we will gain access to resources and artefacts which may help to inspire, shape and inform future research
* Through discussion with the academic team, curators at the Grosvenor Museum will gain new insights into their medieval collections, helping to further inform their own records, descriptive materials and future exhibitions
* The academic team will gain project management experience and career development opportunities

Wider Academic Community

In addition to the named academic team, 'Discover Medieval Chester' aims to bring the following benefits to the wider academic community:

* A one-day workshop at Swansea University on research and knowledge transfer, with particular emphasis on working with the heritage and tourism sectors. This will bring together the 'Discover Medieval Chester' team and additional project stakeholders, along with other delegates including representatives from CADW, BT, RCAHMW, and other HEIs, in order to discuss experiences, challenges, examples of good practice, and strategies for communicating research with wider audiences to achieve quantifiable benefits. This event will ensure that the 'Discover Medieval Chester' project has a wider impact in terms of informing and shaping future approaches to knowledge transfer within the arts and humanities, and will also enable the immediate project team to learn from other experienced practitioners.
* This event fits within the strategic aims of Swansea University's Research Institute in the Arts and Humanities, which has pledged £1500 in matched funding
* Our ongoing experiences of working in a knowledge transfer environment and with non-HEI partners will be discussed and shared via a project Blog.

Impact Summary

Impact Summary (please refer to the help for guidance on what to consider when completing this section) [up to 4000 chars]

This project is designed to share innovative, high-quality research on place and identity in the medieval city with diverse user constituencies in order to achieve a significant, lasting impact beyond the academic community. It will concentrate on three key areas of impact, achieving a range of social, cultural and economic benefits.

Cultural and Social

* Research shared by the academic team will enable the Grosvenor Museum to better understand, contextualise, manage and display its medieval collections, and communicate the implications of new scholarship to the wider community
* The exhibition at the Grosvenor Museum and Wrexham Museum will enable local communities and visitors to learn more about the medieval heritage of the area, as well as the historical background to interactions between north-west England and North Wales
* The interactive website will enable users (both locals, tourists and remote 'virtual visitors') to explore the medieval heritage of Chester
* The interactive online materials will provide virtual access to many locations in Chester, either for international users, or for those who have restricted mobility
* With the help of the in-house educational specialist at the Grosvenor Museum, all our resources will be developed to include child-friendly formats, and to target the requirements of particular National Curriculum Key Stages
* Informed by our recent research on different communities within the medieval city, the project materials will encourage users to engage with the long history of multi-culturalism and diversity in the urban environment
* The innovative research on medieval Chester disseminated by the project will enable audiences to explore issues of place, identity and community which are relevant to every individual

Economic and Regeneration

* Working with the Grosvenor Museum and other stakeholders (e.g. Visit Chester, Cheshire West and Chester Council) the project will develop new tourism potential by promoting the medieval heritage of the city
* The exhibition will be hosted in both Chester and Wrexham, bringing benefits to both of these locations
* We expect the initial exhibition in Chester to attract 31,700 visitors, with a further 5000 visiting the exhibition in Wrexham
* Financial estimates project a significant benefit to the local economies from tourism generated by our project
* The public art commissioned by the project will be located in an area designated as a target for regeneration. The AHRC contribution towards this art will be extended with matched funding pledged by other organisations (£12,000 secured; £40,000 applications pending)
* 'Discover Medieval Chester' will build upon and realise the full potential of wider regeneration initiatives in Chester and North Wales, including the recent Renaissance North-West funding for a Grosvenor Museum collections review (£5700) and the EU 'Portico' grant to restore the fabric of the medieval city walls (1,000,000 Euros), as well as the £950,000 National Lottery-funded refurbishment of Wrexham Museum
* The sale of our tour brochures will provide ongoing revenue and ensure sustainability for this element of the project

Policy

* We have already established a productive conversation with Cheshire West and Chester Council. 'Discover Medieval Chester' has been written into their new 'Public Realm Strategy', and this project will help to influence ongoing decisions about heritage and interpretation in the city
* The project will help to shape future priorities at the Grosvenor Museum, encouraging the increased display and promotion of its medieval collections
* Cheshire West and Chester Council has selected the public art element of this project to be a case study in good

practice in the management and production of public art