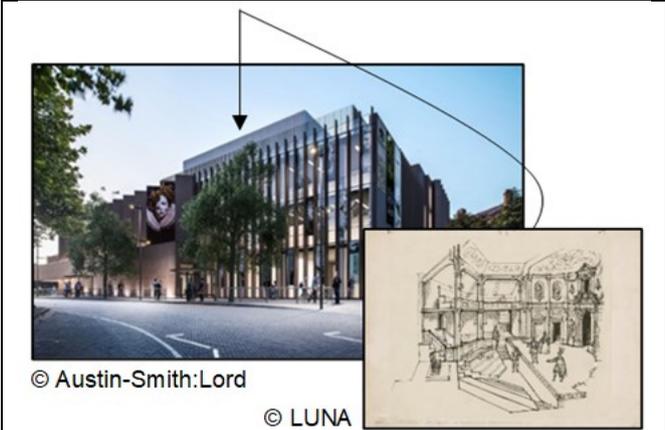


Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU)		
Unit of Assessment: UOA27		
Title of case study: Shakespeare North		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - present		
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:
Elspeth Graham	Professor of Early-Modern Literature	1989 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2005 - present		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Shakespeare North (SN) is a £35m, multi-layered, multi-dimensional partnership project between Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) and Shakespeare North Trust (SNT) with LJMU as the founding academic partner. It focalises regeneration of the Merseyside borough of Knowsley (England's second most deprived Super Output Area, with low life expectancy, poor life chances; the lowest level of educational attainment nationally; and England's highest 2020 Covid-19 infection rates) through commemoration of its Elizabethan and Jacobean theatrical heritage. Centrally, SN is building a replica of Inigo Jones' Cockpit-in-Court theatre, enclosed within a modern building and performance garden, making up the Shakespeare North Playhouse (SNP) as a local landmark, visitor attraction, economic stimulus, and hub for extensive educational and community activities.</p> <p>SN was conceived and initiated – and the SN partnership was set up – by Elspeth Graham and her former colleague Matthew Jordan in 2004. It arose from knowledge of an anomalous, under-researched, Elizabethan playhouse in the town of Prescott in Knowsley. Graham's subsequent research into why this mysterious theatre existed and into Knowsley's wider theatrical and cultural heritage provides the <i>raison d'être</i> and underpinning narrative of SN. Both Graham's research and her central involvement as a trustee/director of SNT have continued throughout the project's development.</p>		
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>© Austin-Smith:Lord</p> <p>© LUNA</p> </div> </div> <p>The Cockpit-in-Court at Shakespeare North Playhouse</p>		
<p>Adopted as the core of KMBC's 2016 Masterplan for Prescott, contributing to Liverpool City Region's development plans, and part-funded through national government's Northern Powerhouse scheme, SN has informed local government plans and policy, stimulated economic development, and produced a new sense of local identity and pride through its cultural and educational initiatives.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Three relatively little-known publications on the Elizabethan playhouse in Prescott pre-dated the Shakespeare North project. The local historian F.A. Bailey published his archival discovery of its existence in 1952; David George, as editor of <i>Records of Early English Drama: Lancashire</i>, 1991, evidenced and briefly discussed it, and also published a separate 2003 essay on it. Both Bailey and George emphasise how surprising the existence of this playhouse in a small, out-of-the-way 'poore towne' seems. Graham's research challenges this view. By establishing a geo-cultural-historical methodology that is broader in its concerns than some conventional theatre-historical research, she and her research assistant Rosemary Tyler produced new research into the cultural and socio-economic context of the Prescott playhouse (3.1). This enabled them to reveal a greater socio-cultural entrepreneurialism in Elizabethan Prescott than formerly recognised, and to suggest connections between the playhouse and the better-known patronage activities of the Earls of</p>		

Derby, one of whose major residences, Knowsley Hall, borders Prescott. From this new story, formed by connecting previously disparate areas of knowledge and grounding such connections in new empirical evidence, Graham's research has continued to privilege connectivity as a methodological approach, allowing her to produce new knowledge about early-modern, north-western theatrical cultures and an overall narrative relating to the Shakespeare North project. This informs her 'Introduction' to the 2020 special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* on 'The Earls of Derby and the Early-Modern Performance Culture of North-West England', which she curated and edited (3.3). Here, she argues that focalisation through the forms of theatre and performance associated with NW England can provide a fresh perspective on configurations of region, metropolis, and nation in relation to early-modern theatre. In this way, her research into NW performance cultures and their relationship to national cultures offers a new viewpoint on the broad history of early English theatre history and provides a research-based rationale for the SN project. It speaks to ways in which – in a modern context – SN similarly aims to re-configure regional and national interests by providing the apex to a national Shakespearean triangle: Shakespeare's Globe in London; the RSC in Stratford; and SN in Knowsley.

Graham's individual research into early-modern, north-west performance cultures has taken place alongside her establishment, facilitation, and support of varied research groups. Her commitment to community-based and -focussed research is exemplified by her work with Tyler, the former curator of Prescott Museum; her establishment of a SN Archaeology Group to discuss research and organise community digs (in conjunction with Prescott Townscape Heritage Initiative); her role as chair of the SN Communities Group (which organises historically-themed or performance-focussed events); and her position as advisor to SN's Community Curators, a KMBC-led group of local-community members who are further researching Prescott's history to identify themes and materials for SNP's Exhibition Space (also being developed in relation to the V & A as a formal partner).

Her mentoring of, and collaboration with, LJMU colleagues, particularly Rebecca Bailey (see 3.4), and work with Dr Stephen Lloyd (Curator to the Derby Collection and Archive, Knowsley Hall) led to development and consolidation of academic research on north-western performance cultures through a re-enactment event and symposium, co-organised with Lloyd and hosted by the Countess of Derby at Knowsley Hall in 2016 (see 5.2 and 5.5). This brought together, for the first time, international scholars with expertise in 'Shakespeare, the Earls of Derby and the North West' and formed the basis of the *Shakespeare Bulletin* special issue (see 3.3 & 3.4). The Knowsley Hall symposium, attracting a mixed audience of academic scholars, national and regional cultural influencers, and members of the public, has been complemented by a biennial series of SN Community Symposia, organised by Graham in response to subsequent public demand (see 4 and 5.2).

3. References to the research

1. Elspeth Graham and Rosemary Tyler, "'So unbridled & badde an handfull of England": the social and cultural ecology of the Elizabethan Playhouse in Prescott' (with Rosemary Tyler) in S. Davies and M. Benbough-Jackson, eds., *Merseyside: Culture and Place*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011, 109-40. [ISBN: 978-1443829649]. (Submitted to REF 2014)
2. Elspeth Graham, 'Places of Play: Elizabethan theatre, the earls of Derby, Prescott, Lathom and Knowsley' in Stephen Lloyd, ed., *Art, Animals and Politics: Knowsley and the Earls of Derby*, Unicorn Press, 2015. [ISBN: 9781910065822].
3. Graham, Elspeth, ed., *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 38.3, special issue on 'The Earls of Derby and the Early-Modern Performance Culture of North-West England', 2020. [Available on request]
4. Rebecca Bailey, 'Sir Thomas Salusbury's Twelfth Night Masque performed at Knowsley Hall in 1640/1' in E. Graham ed., *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 38.3, special issue on 'The Earls of Derby and the Early-Modern Performance Culture of North-West England', 2020. [Available on request]

Funding and Research Grants 2016 - July 2020

SN's community engagement (AHRC Pathways to Impact) underpinned the successful funding application for the 2011-14, AHRC-funded Early Modern Memory & Community network (other participating universities: UEL [PI]; Newcastle; Queen's, Belfast [CI]): £31.705.32. Graham, one of four named collaborators and overall organisers, led and shaped the 4th network symposium

at LJMU on early modern history, popular culture and heritage. It brought together international academic scholars, PGRs, curators, community group chairs, community artists, and local historians. (Costs: £6,5000).

4. Details of the impact

Ultimately, stimulus of Knowsley's regeneration will be centred in, and focalised by, the SN Playhouse which will become fully operational in 2022. But realising the overall ambition has pivotally depended on establishing precursory levels of **cultural and economic regeneration, public realm improvement and increased educational aspiration** in the borough. Crucially, capture of SN capital funding has, in itself, worked to produce exceptional levels of community involvement in, and commitment to, regenerative and transformative activity (see 5.1; 5.2; 5.3 and 5.4). In this context, a programme of **community-engagement, co-creation, knowledge exchange, educational and heritage-based cultural activity** has run throughout the REF Impact period. The varied forms of impact arising from SN, as a major urban transformation project, have involved SN trustees; KMBC Directorates and teams; SN community volunteers; and groups affiliated to SN. Graham has collaborated with all of these and has played a particular role in leading and advising on heritage-based, educational, and community events and initiatives. While the full benefits so far accrued through SN are too extensive to be fully detailed, they can be indicatively evidenced through quantitative data relating to some aspects, and by more qualitative description of selected examples of SN sub-strands.

Indicators of SN's overall impact to date:

- Capture of capital funding for the SN Playhouse (2016-2020: £30.1m), plus a further £14.3m public realm funding, contingent on SN, has attracted business investment into Knowsley and began Prescott's **economic regeneration** (see 5.3 and 5.4.) In 2018-20, eleven new, independent, leisure-related businesses (such as Shakespeare-linked, independent 'eateries' and bars e.g.: 'The Bard'; 'Harrington's' – named after the builder of Prescott's original playhouse, so evidencing the penetration of SN's research story into community consciousness) replaced derelict, betting, charity, or pawn shops in Prescott's central streets; a Prescott-business collective spontaneously formed; 124 temporary construction jobs (continuing through the Covid-19 lockdown period) were created for local people. The construction of 1,500 new homes by national developers (Barratts, Anwyll, Taylor Wimpey, and Countryside), directly resulting from Prescott's development as a new cultural destination, as described in the Masterplan, is underway (see 5.3 and 5.4). Public excitement was expressed in 2018's/19's widely-tweeted slogans: 'Knowsley's on the up!' and 'There's a buzz in Prescott!'
- Public-realm improvements began in 2018 and are largely complete (5.3 and 5.4) Prescott's historic marketplace, reconfigured as an outdoor performance space with a bistro and café-bar, opened in 2019 with Imaginarium, (formerly MATE: a community theatre company, affiliated to SN), as the operator; and the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) – important to the marketing and experience of Prescott as a vibrant, historic town – began in 2013 and will be completed in April 2021 (to mid-2020: 15 Conservation Area buildings were restored; and 8 new town-centre dwellings plus two new business premises were created from previously vacant buildings). The Historic-England-funded Heritage Action Zone which aims further to 'foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the historic environment through heritage-led regeneration', 'combining, heritage, culture, community, enterprise and regeneration' aspects, includes restoration of the historic 'Cockpit House', adjacent to the SN Playhouse. (5.4).

The reach and impact of **SN's core programme of cultural and heritage-based activity**, can be suggested by statistical indicators:

- Nationally: BBC One's The One Show - documentary features on SN and collaboration with SN in running a children's playwriting competition in 2020, 'As You Write It', reaching a total of over 35m viewers and attracting 1300 competition entrants. Articles in: *The Financial Times* (2019: global paying readership over 1m; 650K online readers); *The Stage* (several articles: 400,000 per month [online]; 30,000 readers per week [print] readership); *The Big Issue* (11 Feb 2019: 82,000 copies per week; an estimated 406K readers).

- At a local level frequent articles in the *Liverpool Echo* (circulation 35,038) and BBC NW News (average audience 700,000).
- In total, 56,430 Knowsley residents participated in a Shakespeare North-related event in 2018. This number is also indicative of numbers in previous years and in 2019.
- Each year (except for 2020 Covid-19 period), an average of 22,000 people attended Knowsley Flower Show and 6000 people visited Prescott's Elizabethan Fayre where SN Communities Group (chaired by Graham) had information stalls, engaged in lively discussion, ideas-pooling, consultation and debate with townspeople, and hosted children's activities (making ruffs, Tudor rose birthday cards etc.)
- 26,789 people visited Prescott Museum's exhibition of Shakespearean Costume, engaging in knowledge dissemination and creative activities in 2018.
- The annual Shakespeare Schools Festival, funded in Knowsley by KMBC as a direct investment in SN-related educational activity, has involved between 12 and 19 Knowsley primary and secondary schools in each of the years 2014-2019 (pre-Covid). SSF's mission is to 'use the unique power of Shakespeare to develop self-esteem, articulacy, literacy and teamwork for students; skills they need to succeed in life'. 9500 audience members have watched 4276 students from Knowsley schools performing, demonstrating an increased interest in educational activity. Through children, a wider family audience has been built for SN.
- An audience of 800 attended a single-night performance by The Lord Chamberlain's Men of *The Tempest* at Knowsley Hall in 2018 (Knowsley Estate in collaboration with SN.) Similar audience numbers were attracted by *Much Ado About Nothing* in 2016 and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2017. The keen appetite for such performances evidences Knowsley community's adoption of their new Shakespeare-heritage identity.
- Community and Youth Theatre productions by MATE/Imaginarium Theatre, a key SN associate company, has converted many members of the local community from thinking that 'Shakespeare's not for us. It's too posh' to a genuine pleasure in, and excitement about, Shakespearean performance, Prescott's emerging cultural identity, and new potentials for themselves and their children. MATE's outdoor, promenade community productions have attracted c. 2000 local Knowsley people each year as audiences and have involved 3500 people (aged 5 to 85) in performances, backstage activities and workshops over the period.

The flavour, value and benefit of SN **community and educational enhancement activities** are more qualitatively instanced by two particular examples of SN sub-projects:

1. Lost Castles, August 2018 (with Graham as collaborator and advisor on literary and historical aspects): 7070 Knowsley residents (adults and children) learned how to build a replica of Hamlet's Elsinore Castle from cardboard boxes through workshops, then created Elinsore during a day-long event at Knowsley Safari, followed by a demolition fiesta day (as part of 2018 LCR-wide project). This was an information exchange, skills-building and community cohesion event, that aimed to create a 'pool of talent' with pathways into the creative sectors; and to showcase the region as a centre for cultural innovation to local residents and nationally through a reach of over 5m social media users. 100,000 people attended at least one day of the Lost Castles weekend; 48.8% of participants surveyed had never before taken part in a cultural event; and 98% of participants reported a more positive sense of local belonging and a keener interest in local culture. In feedback, the impact on lives of socially-isolated people was particularly strongly voiced: one resident reported she had not previously spoken to anyone for the past six weeks, but would now become actively involved in SN, for instance. Knowsley participants commented on the cohesive effects of 'being involved in the camaraderie of a community project'; how 'Everyone of any age, ability, background could engage in making something so huge and beautiful' and a particularly moving narrative account of 'One person's Lost Castle story', described how 'The whole concept of this project blew me away'; 'The feeling of pride and accomplishment was absolute'; and how the event engaged people imaginatively, emotionally, and socially:

The workshops taught the kids (and adults) what we can do with careful planning and lots of teamwork. The build taught everyone what can be achieved if you only have the vision to see it and the will to see it though. The deconstruction reminded us of what it is to be kids. To forget reason and logic. All that time. All that effort. And for what...Adults don't get it. The reason was simple, but you can't explain it – only feel it. Smashing that castle was one of the greatest

moments of my adult life...the best part of a wonderful time I spent with strangers who became neighbours.' (See 5.2 and 5.4.)

2. SN Community Symposia. These sell-out events (filling Prescott Church Hall), were created in response to public demand and were organised by the SN Communities Group, chaired by Graham. They seek to offer high-level, innovative research in a lively and accessible form to Knowsley people (see 5.2). In 2017, speakers and performers for 'Then and Now: Shakespearean Theatre, Prescott and Knowsley' included: cartographic historian William Shannon revising the Burghley Map of Lancashire; Northern Broadside's Conrad Nelson; Peter McCurdy (builder of the SN Cockpit Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe, and the Sam Wanamaker Theatre); and LJMU's Rebecca Bailey. The 2019 Symposium, 'Shakespeare North, Voice and Sound' featured David and Ben Crystal on Shakespearean Original Pronunciation; Tony Crowley on Merseyside language; the Oxford-postgraduate lutenist, Sara Liber Salloum; Jane Boston from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and Kathy Dacre (SN trustee) on voice in theatre; Carole Arnold, a Prescott head teacher whose imaginative, primary-school project 'Prescot Loves to Talk', fostering articulacy in Prescott children, is connected to SN. It focussed on matters of diversity and empowerment through language, bringing the excellence of nationally recognised speakers and performers together with Knowsley people, their local concerns and attributes on an equal footing. Through interactive and often humorous sessions, it produced a palpable sense of excitement, pride and an affective warmth between speakers and audience. Feedback emphasised the event's success in fostering a sense of mutuality and dialogue between participants with different roles and diverse backgrounds and described how those who attended were still buzzing days afterwards (see 5.2).

Graham's role:

As well as participating in specific aspects of the project's delivery, Graham has directly presented her research and her vision for the overall project development through numerous talks and workshops for KMBC from 2005 (initial presentation of the SN idea), through 2016 (Prescot Masterplan, 5.6 & 5.7), to 2019. In 2014-19, Graham gave 21 public talks to regional community groups, including particularly significant lectures to: The Royal Town Planning Institute; VIP guests to Merseyside Arts Theatre and Education (MATE)'s 2015 community production of A Midsummer Night's Dream and subsequent annual Shakespeare performances by MATE and the Lord Chamberlain's Men; and, in July 2015, to a key consortium of businesses and organisations: Knowsley Ambassadors. (See 5.3 on these as funding and project-realising conversion activities.) Such forms of dissemination have been extended by her membership of stakeholder boards such as: Prescott THI Advisory Board and contribution to THI funding applications; the founding Knowsley Place Board; Knowsley Visitor Economy Network, Love Prescott), helping embed the project in SN-associated local initiatives. Her research has been further disseminated through community consultation meetings; TV and radio interviews; and academic conferences. Activities informed by Graham's research also stimulate new cycles of research and application, creating a generative loop of research and impactful enterprise. Future scholarly publications theorising, reflectively analysing, and further disseminating SN educational and community sub-projects are in press or contracted to be published in 2021-2022.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. SN Capital Funding summary.
2. SN Playhouse Website: <https://www.shakespearenorthplayhouse.co.uk/>. See especially Community, Education and Past Events pages.
3. Letter of confirmation: CEO, KMBC.
4. Letter of confirmation: CEO (Interim), Shakespeare North.
5. Letter of confirmation: The Right Honourable, the Earl of Derby DL, Chair of SN Patrons.
6. *Hansard*: report of 2015 parliamentary debate on Shakespeare North led by Sir George Howarth, MP for Knowsley: [http://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-12-08/debates/15120845000003/ShakespeareTheatre\(Knowsley\)?highlight=Shakespeare%20North%20Prescot#contribution-15120845000162](http://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-12-08/debates/15120845000003/ShakespeareTheatre(Knowsley)?highlight=Shakespeare%20North%20Prescot#contribution-15120845000162), referenced in 5.4.
7. Peter Brett Associates/KMBC: Prescott Masterplan, especially pp. 25, 27 also 15,19, 32.