

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)

PROJECT TITLE				
Bradgate Park in a wider world: a historical-archaeological investigation of the colonial connections of an elite estate				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution				
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation		Bradgate Park Trust (BPT)		
URL for organisation website		https://www.bradgatepark.org/		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<p>To enable M4C to promote the CDA project effectively on the DTP website please can you present the information for applicants about the CDA project under the following headings:</p> <p>Project: Please ensure that the project title and project description will make sense to all readers, keep the title and description as clear and straightforward as possible.</p> <p>Process: Clearly articulate the expectations of the methods of research required to develop the project.</p> <p>Place: Focus the marketing text on telling potential applicants what will be expected of them, who they will be working with and how they will be supported.</p> <p>Person: Broadly identify the desirable knowledge, skills and experience applicants should have without using language which will discourage qualified and talented applicants.</p>				
Project				
<p>This project examines the connections between an elite estate and the wider colonial world through its gardens and buildings, and materials that flowed through the house and landscapes. A place-based study of empire at home, will diversify histories of the countryside and make them accessible to diverse publics.</p>				
Process				
<p>Bradgate Park is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Leicestershire: an 840-acre estate, containing the standing remains of the childhood home of Lady Jane Grey: 9-day Tudor queen of England. The landscape and country house are quintessentially English, but what are the material flows that generate that Englishness? Recent grassroots movements such as Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall demonstrate increasing public and academic interest in decolonial histories and how identities formed through colonialism and empire. The histories of rural and urban places and what and how heritage is valued and presented is at the heart of debates in contemporary cultural life. To view such places as essentially separate from port cities, plantations, and entanglements with empire is to misinterpret the nature of colonialism and to underestimate its operations and complexity. Leicestershire, like other places, was tied into transatlantic histories which led to the emergence of the nature-culture hierarchies and race, class, and gender systems on which the modern world is based. More concretely, analysis of specific places, such as Bradgate Park, through a framework which centres its relations can reveal intricate and unanticipated connections among materials, people, and landscapes.</p>				

How colonial connections formed and sustained post-1500 country estates are topics best addressed through the multidisciplinary strengths of historical archaeology. Viewing post-1500 Bradgate Park as a dynamic assemblage of local and exotic materials, species, substances, and activities, maps an outward-facing history of rural places. This could involve tracing the connections in flora and fauna, analysing the material flows of turkeys, potatoes, sugar, spices, and tobacco through kitchens and bodies, attending to the nature-culture hierarchies in its built environments, as well as the activities, family histories, and commercial interests of the linked estates of Dunham Massey and Enville Hall. There are several ways in which this question can be addressed depending on your expertise and interest. Topics and datasets could include:

- The house and standing and buried buildings (e.g. stables, dog kennel, carriage house)
- Landscape and gardens (house gardens, exotic Victorian plantings, deer hunting, leisure and retreat)
- Consumption and commerce (archaeological assemblages curated at the University of Leicester: clay pipes, glassware, ceramics, flora and fauna)
- Historical archive: Grey (Stamford) of Dunham Massey Papers, 1678-1681. Links to South Africa, India, and the exiled ruler of Ethiopia Haile Selassie. Household Account Book.

Place

You would be joining the world-leading researchers in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester, who rank 5th in the UK for overall research quality (GPA) (REF2021 analysis by Times Higher Education). Your primary supervisor directed a five-year archaeological [fieldschool](#) within Bradgate Park; the second supervisor is a leading historical archaeologist, with experience working in the Caribbean; and you will be supported by the academic lead of the [Colonial Countryside Project](#) (based in Museum Studies). You will be supported in engaging with the wider research culture of the University, including with the recently launched [Heritage Hub](#). You will also be integrated into the Bradgate Park Team from the start of the project to encourage two-way knowledge exchange. In partnership with the [Bradgate Park Trust](#), you will produce a temporary exhibition for the Park visitor centre, with a permanent education resource bank. The aim is to inspire engagement in local colonial history and heritage, integrating less familiar stories into the estate's history. This will be supplemented and supported through tours, online resources, and training materials for visitor guides. Target audiences are local communities, special interest groups, and the wider public.

Person

The project is suitable for candidates with master's-level or equivalent professional experience in archaeology, history, museum studies, and/or material culture studies. We are looking for a candidate that is prepared to work across disciplinary boundaries to critically appraise existing archaeological evidence, historical records, and landscape evidence, and generate an outward-facing narrative of place, the estate, and family. Previous experience of outreach and public engagement is highly desirable.

(750 words)

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE. Please email the lead university supervisor if you want to find out more about this CDA project.

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