

PhD Studentship in Collections-Based Research (History and Geography)

Project title: Preservationism and Development in Rural England, 1926-2016: Policy and Practice

Departments: History and Geography

Supervisors: Dr Jeremy Burchardt, Department of History and Dr Hilary Geoghegan, Department of Geography and Environmental Science

Project Overview: Two competing versions of the role of preservationism in modern British history exist side-by-side in the historical literature. According to the first, preservationists were a small minority that was largely powerless to stand in the way of the juggernaut of economic development. This narrative, given lucid expression for example in Trevor Rowley's *The English Landscape in the Twentieth Century* (2005), appears to resonate with public perceptions of rural landscape change, construed largely as an experience of loss. Equally influential within academic writing (e.g. Howard Newby's *Green and Pleasant Land?*, 1979), although perhaps less prominent in wider public discourse, is the diametrically opposed view that preservationism has exerted a damaging stranglehold on rural development through its excessive influence on rural policy.

On the face of it, the co-existence of these two apparently contradictory interpretations of the role of rural preservationism in modern English history is surprising. However, there is a simple explanation – virtually no detailed research on the relationship between the preservationist movement and policy-making has been carried out. Because of its centrality to debates about modernity, Englishness and the environment, preservationism is attracting increasing attention from a wide range of disciplines, including historical geography, social history, cultural studies and ecocriticism, but most existing studies have focused on preservationist discourse. Yet it is difficult to assess the significance of this discourse without much greater knowledge of how and with what effects it was deployed in historical practice. This project aims to fill this major gap in the literature by providing the first full historical account of the nexus between rural preservation and policy-making, drawing on (i) the extensive archival holdings of the CPRE and other rural preservationist organizations and individuals at MERL, The National Archives at Kew and local government records in county archives, and (ii) oral histories with members of the CPRE and policymakers during the period in question. The resulting PhD will provide evidence and insight into rural policy-making, planning and preservation that will be valuable not only for historians but also the heritage sector and all those concerned with contemporary rural policy, land use and development.

Eligibility:

- Applicants should hold a minimum of a 2:1 Bachelors Degree in History, Geography or a cognate discipline.
- Due to restrictions on the funding this studentship is only open to candidates who are categorised for fees purposes as UK(Home)/EU.

Funding Details:

- Start date: October 2014
- Duration: 3 years full-time or part-time equivalent
- Fees paid, bursary of 4k per annum.

How to apply: To apply for this studentship please submit an application for a PhD in History to the University – see <http://www.reading.ac.uk/Study/apply/pg-applicationform.aspx>

Please quote the reference GS-CBR10 in the ‘*Scholarships applied for*’ box which appears within the *Funding Section* of your on-line application.

Application Deadline: 29 March 2014.

Further Enquiries: For further details please contact

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