Leadership Fellows

PROPOSAL

Leadership Fellows - Early Career (Open Call)

Organisation where the Fellowship would be held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>University of Bristol</th>
<th>Research Organisation Reference:</th>
<th>Creative Witchcraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division or Department</td>
<td>School of Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title of Proposed Research [up to 150 chars]
Creative Histories of Witchcraft, France 1790-1940

Start Date and Duration
a. Proposed start date 01 October 2018  
b. Duration of the grant (months) 18

Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Division or Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellow</td>
<td>Dr William Pooley</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>School of Humanities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objectives

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

Creative Histories of Witchcraft will develop imaginative approaches to new research into witchcraft in France 1790-1940. It has the following core objectives:

1. Promote the importance of discussions of ‘creativity’ within historical practice, by demonstrating how specific creative methodologies, including dramatic presentation and short-form writing can create dynamic conversations between academic research, heritage and arts practitioners, and the wider public.
2. Establish my profile as a world-leading scholar on modern witchcraft, with a research base of hundreds of criminal cases, most of which have never been studied.
3. Disseminate the creative research from the project to non-academic beneficiaries, including the modern pagan community through a mini-festival open to the public and hosted at the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle, and at the Brigstow Institute in Bristol.
4. Pioneer a non-fiction crossover book which uses creative writing methodologies to explore a case from the 1920s as a representative of the wider phenomenon of crimes connected to modern witchcraft.
5. Produce peer-reviewed articles that have a transformative effect on the field - one historical intervention on the numbers and types of witchcraft cases in France 1790-1940, and one methodological piece.
6. Develop my leadership capacity by working with two Creative Writers (CWs).
7. Provide opportunities for the two CWs to contribute to a ground-breaking project and develop their own profiles as academic collaborators.
8. Forge links with partner organizations including the Museum of Witchcraft, and arts and heritage organizations who are part of the University of Bristol's Brigstow Institute's network of arts and heritage organizations, and cultivate these links for future collaborations.

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.

This project addresses two core questions. The first is a historical puzzle: why did witchcraft endure into the modern period in France? The second is methodological: which tools and techniques can historians learn from working collaboratively with creative practitioners, such as playwrights and poets?

Witchcraft should not have existed in nineteenth-century France. Decriminalized in 1682, witchcraft was definitively excluded from legal consideration by the Revolutionary penal code of 1791. As a crime ‘created by superstition’, in the Revolutionaries’ terms, witchcraft had no official place in criminal procedure. Among medical specialists, a growing consensus held that belief in witches was a delusion. Over the nineteenth century support for the possibility of witchcraft even drained from the Catholic Church, as it grew more concerned with responding to the challenges of secularism and policing the boundaries of orthodox practice. Yet, from the French Revolution to the Second World War, large numbers of French men and women believed that other humans could harm them using supernatural powers. More than six hundred and fifty criminal cases involving witchcraft testify to how seriously many people took this belief during a period when the reality of witchcraft was dismissed by many legal, medical, and religious authorities. From 1791-1940, at least sixty seven men and women were murdered as suspected witches, and even more were assaulted. Hundreds of people were successfully prosecuted for fraud and illegal medical practice for claiming to have the power to bewitch or un-witch. The project explores a range of digitized newspaper accounts as well as archival records of court the court cases to examine why witchcraft persisted.

How can historians bring these fears of witchcraft to life, and how can they do this with sensitivity to the harms for which witchcraft beliefs are responsible? This project adopts novel approaches to exploring the puzzling persistence of witchcraft, involving imaginative reconstruction and creative writing. Through collaborations with creative practitioners the project will

Date Saved: 04/01/2018 13:21:28
Date Printed: 04/01/2018 13:23:39
Proposal original proforma document
explore dramatic and novelistic presentations of real-life witchcraft cases from the nineteenth century. It will lead to three types of output:

1. Academic articles on the social profiles of the men and women involved in witchcraft conflicts, and on the methodological value of a turn to creativity among historians.
2. A portfolio of creative writing pieces, including theatre scripts, poetry, and non-fiction, with an introduction co-written by all three core project members.
3. A crossover book, which uses the tools of non-fiction and creative writing to present the true story of a 1925 case of a murdered witch from the point of view of the murderer himself.

Events on the project include a mini-festival of theatre and creative writing about witchcraft, and three workshops on creative writing, theatre, and historical research. These events will serve to catalyse work by historians interested in dramatizing their research, thereby setting the agenda for the emerging field of creative histories.

Rather than treating creativity as a way to turn research into entertaining outputs, what does it mean to embrace creative methods from the beginning of a project? These questions are especially pressing for the case of witchcraft. Some academics have worried that the emotional investment of radical feminists and modern Wiccans has distorted this history, producing good stories that are academically unsound. This project will suggest, on the contrary, that there are ways that working creatively can also facilitate better academic research, including short-form writing and the use of dramatic dialogue. Not only does this have implications for the history of criminal justice in this period, as well as for the history of witchcraft: it also suggests ways that many different types of historians can learn from creative practices.

### Outputs

**The main outputs of the research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book (single authored)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal article (refereed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece of creative writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/ethics/

### Academic Beneficiaries

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

This project will both transform understandings of witchcraft in modern France and lead conversations on the methodological potential of creative historical research. As such, it will benefit four main groups of academics.

1. Creative historians

'Creative histories' is an emerging research field, represented by the growth of several new organizations, including the...
Historical Fictions Research Network, and the StoryingthePast network and events. These groups attract a range of participants, from creative practitioners to heritage professionals and academics, as well as interested members of the general public, and have been supported with funding from the British Academy. The project will build on this impetus by demonstrating what specific creative methods such as short-form writing and the use of dialogue of dramatized speech can bring to a research topic. By producing a range of creative and academic outputs and a methodological reflection, it will demonstrate the benefits of creativity in action. By directly recruiting two Creative Writers (CWs), the project will also forge closer links with creative writing programs. Large numbers of creative writing students produce coursework and dissertations that employ historical research, yet historians and creative writers rarely come together to discuss their shared tools.

2. Social historians of crime
There is obvious impact potential in creative histories of crime, as podcasts, documentaries, and popular non-fiction books on miscarriages of justice and scandalous cases demonstrate. What this project offers historians of crime is a model for how to produce academically rigorous research that taps into this sometimes sensationalist appeal. As a demonstration of the continuing social and cultural importance of witchcraft in this period, the project fundamentally challenges existing social histories of crime in the nineteenth century, which have tended to focus on 'modern' developments, such as the transition from violent crime to property crime, or the increasing prevalence of frauds during this period. The importance of witchcraft, however, is not that it is an atavistic survival. The project will lay the foundations for future work to show historians of crime how witchcraft participated and contributed to the changing legal system during this period, including the roles it played in debates over violence, fraudulence, and honour.

3. Historians of witchcraft
The project addresses a major omission in the growing literature on witchcraft in the modern period, by exhaustively cataloguing criminal cases from 1789-1940. As such, it poses challenges to a historiography that has tended to place the early-modern witch craze at the centre of histories of witchcraft, demanding instead that witchcraft be considered a part of modern European history. Modern witchcraft participates in different cultural and intellectual conversations, connected to newer ideas about medicine, psychiatry, and the Occult. At the same time, the project should interest historians of the early-modern cases in terms of the continuities of geography and social structure that predominate in the cases.

4. Anthropologists of contemporary witchcraft
Although there is widespread awareness among anthropologists and aid organizations of the damage that witchcraft beliefs continue to cause among African and African-diaspora populations, it is much less widely-known that violence against suspected witches is also a part of modern European history, right up to the present day, with French rural cases as recently as 2016. The project will address this omission, and help anthropologists interested in modern witchcraft to gain a broader, historicised understanding of violence against suspected witches.

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 will benefit the following non-academic stakeholders:

1. Arts organizations and local museums. Museums, archives, and arts organizations have led the way in developing new approaches to historical materials that engage with a range of interested audiences. This project will develop conversations between these organizations and academics who are experimenting with creative writing, theatre, and arts practices. Inviting a selection of local organizations to the workshops in Bristol will be an opportunity for academics to learn how heritage professionals and arts organizations have been creatively presenting historical materials. For the non-academic partners, it will provide them with examples of cutting-edge academic research that also speaks to questions of impact and engagement. The support of the Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol is central to the administration of the project and will also offer financial support. The goal of the Institute is to bring researchers together with non-academic partners, and the project will greatly benefit from the network the Institute has built up in order to facilitate conversations between
academics, arts practitioners, and heritage institutions.

2. Contemporary pagans. In particular, the themes of the research project will interest contemporary pagans, who are avid for new histories of magical practice, and flexible in their engagement with historical materials. Although this engagement will come towards the end of the project in public events in Boscastle and Bristol, these discussions will also shape the book which I will finish after the project is finished.

To help engage both sets of stakeholders, the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle will be a Project Partner. Coordinating the mini-festival of creative writing and theatre about witchcraft with the Museum offers opportunities to engage with the Museum's collections, library, and ongoing impact work. The Museum is the perfect venue for communicating with the pagan community, as it has a proven track record of attracting contemporary pagans interested in the histories of magic and witchcraft.

The Museum of Witchcraft's role will be to host the mini-festival of creative writing and theatre concerning witchcraft, and they will also be invited to workshops in Bristol on creative writing and dramatizing research.

Further information on impact activities is provided in the Pathways to Impact statement.
## Summary of Resources Required for Project

### Financial resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directly Incurred</th>
<th>Fund heading</th>
<th>Full economic Cost</th>
<th>AHRC contribution</th>
<th>% AHRC contribution</th>
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<td>Staff</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel &amp; Subsistence</td>
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<td>7728.00</td>
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<td>Other Costs</td>
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<td>5632.00</td>
<td>4505.60</td>
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<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
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<td>Other Directly Allocated</td>
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<tr>
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### Summary of staff effort requested

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<td>Researcher</td>
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<td>Technician</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Researcher</td>
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<td>Student</td>
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Other Support

Details of support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in the same field.

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<th>Awarding Organisation’s Reference</th>
<th>Title of project</th>
<th>Decision Made (Y/N)</th>
<th>Award Made (Y/N)</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Amount Sought / Awarded (£)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The British Academy</td>
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<td>Creative Histories</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>15/03/2017</td>
<td>28/02/2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute of Historical Research</td>
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<td>Past and Present Posdoctoral Fellowship</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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## Staff

### Directly Incurred Posts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name /Post Identifier</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Period on Project (months)</th>
<th>% of Full Time</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Increment Date</th>
<th>Basic Starting Salary</th>
<th>London Allowance (£)</th>
<th>Super-annuation and NI (£)</th>
<th>Total cost on grant (£)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fellow</td>
<td>Dr William Pooley</td>
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<td>18</td>
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### Travel and Subsistence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination and purpose</th>
<th>Total £</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within UK: Travel to and accommodation in Bristol for project partner to attend mini-festival</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within UK: Travel to and accommodation in Bristol for five participants in short-form creative writing workshop</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside UK: PI: Travel to and accommodation in western France</td>
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<td>Within UK: PI: Travel and accommodation for Historical Fictions Research Network conference 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within UK: PI and CWFs: travel to and accommodation in Boscastle for mini-festival</td>
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<td>Outside UK: PI: Travel to and accommodation in Paris</td>
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<td>Within UK: PI: Travel to and accommodation in Bristol for five participants in theatre workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within UK: PI and CWFs: Travel, accommodation and registration for Social History Society conference 2019</td>
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<td><strong>Total £</strong></td>
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### Other Directly Incurred Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total £</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catering for theatre workshop for 30 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catering for short-form creative writing workshop</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel costs for up to three interview candidates for 2 CFW positions</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch for up to 3 interview candidates (x2)</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Translation of original research documents into English for CWFs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invited creative writers speakers’ fees for workshops (x3)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Tim Cole, mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total £</strong></td>
<td><strong>5632</strong></td>
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### Other Directly Allocated Costs

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<td>Pool staff costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total £</strong></td>
<td><strong>843</strong></td>
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</table>

### Estates Costs

| Amount (mandatory) | £8,624 |

### Indirect Costs

| Amount (mandatory) | £53,007 |

### Project Partners: details of partners in the project and their contributions to the research. These contributions are in addition to resources identified above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of partner organisation</th>
<th>Division or Department</th>
<th>Name of contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museum of Witchcraft and Magic</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Dr Peter Hewitt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct contribution to project</th>
<th>Value £</th>
<th>Indirect contribution to project</th>
<th>Value £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cash</td>
<td>use of facilities/equipment</td>
<td>Performance space</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment/materials</td>
<td>staff time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondment of staff</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>Research facilities</td>
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<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Contribution</td>
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</table>
Proposal Classifications

Research Area:
Research Areas are the subject areas in which the research proposal may fall and you should select at least one of these. Once you have selected the relevant Research Area(s), please ensure that you set one as primary.

To add or remove Research Areas use the relevant link below. To set a primary area, click in the corresponding checkbox and then the Set Primary Area button that will appear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Keyword</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and museum studies</td>
<td>Museum And Gallery Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural and museum studies</td>
<td>Policy, Arts Management &amp; Creative Industries</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Cultural History [Primary]</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Religious History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Languages and Literature</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
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</table>

Qualifier:
Qualifiers are terms that further describe the area of your research and cover aspects such as approach, time period, and geographical focus. Please ensure you complete this section if relevant.

To add or remove Qualifiers use the links below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<td>Western Europe</td>
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<td>Project Engagement by Sector</td>
<td>General Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>18th Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>19th Century</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Free-text Keywords:
Free-text keywords may be used to describe the subject area of the proposal in more detail. It is particularly important that you provide these where the Research Area(s) you have selected are only defined to two levels.

To add or remove those previously added use the links below.

Classification
Is your research multidisciplinary (i.e. involves researchers from two or more different disciplines)?
✔ Yes  No

Is your research interdisciplinary (i.e. applies methods and approaches of several disciplines)?
✔ Yes  No
Justification of Resources
The project represents good value since I have already completed a large proportion of the primary research. The Creative Writers (CWs) and I will use most of the time on the project to plan and execute the creative projects, disseminate and discuss our practices with relevant academic audiences, and discuss the project with the external partner and other non-academic audiences.

Staff Costs (Directly Allocated)
Mentor (£1,042): Costs are included to cover monthly hour-long meetings with my mentor, Prof. Tim Cole, throughout the project. Prof. Cole has been chosen for his experience managing major projects and mentoring junior staff members, and his expertise in creative cultural research and impact as the director of the Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol.

Staff Costs (Directly Incurred)
Investigator: I must be 100% committed to the project during Year 1, to draw together the final research, coordinate the CWs, liaise with the project partners to organize the two workshops and the public engagement events, write the first article, and prepare the sample book chapter. I will make use of my track-record of working with the digitized newspaper sources to produce the prosopographical article during the first few months of the project, and then turn my attention to the sample book chapter, and book proposal. During the second year, I will devote 20% time plus donated time to finishing the book proposal and writing the methodological article on creative collaborations. I will continue to donate time to the book after the award period.

Creative Writers: The unique value of project comes from my collaboration with the CWs. Many of the arts-based researchers discussed in the Case for Support have pointed out that one of the greatest challenges for academics working in this area is gaining artistic expertise, so that outputs are not only good research, but also good art. Rather than active researchers, the CWs role is as collaborators for both the development of impact activities, and also the ideas that will be essential to the methodological article I will write in Year 2 of the project. This article is an essential part of developing my leadership in this emerging field. Both CWs must be 1.0 FTE to allow them the time to: 1. develop, draft, and revise the creative pieces 2. read around the topic of modern witchcraft in France 3. contribute suggestions for creative readings for the reading group 4. draw up their own critical reflections at the end of the project. Making both CWs 1.0 FTE means that they will be able to focus wholly on the project during Year 1. The CWs will have a track record of publishing or performing relevant work (short-form writing or poetry, and theatre) and may also have university qualifications in creative writing and experience working with academic researchers. They will be appointed based on relevant experience and interest in the research and proven ability to produce commissioned work.

Other Directly Incurred Costs
Travel to Archive (£3,500): The manuscript notes concerning trials which are available in the French archives are an unparalleled source for understanding the cases, and a necessary part of the microhistorical case studies involved in the project. I will travel alone to the archives in Paris and in western France to consult a targeted selection of cases that have been pre-identified through the search of digitized newspapers. I have already completed five research trips to Alsace, Normandy, and the areas around Paris supported by a Past and Present fellowship at the Institute for Historical Research and the Faculty Research Fund at the University of Bristol. My expertise will make these two trips a cost-efficient way to research the case studies. The expenses have been planned with a focus on short (2-3 weeks), intensive research trips to collect the pre-identified materials as efficiently as possible. These materials are not digitized, and it is impractical, ineffective, and expensive to pay another researcher or the archives to undertake this work.
Dissemination Activities (£1560): My dissemination plans include presentations at two key conferences for the project’s target academic audiences: social historians of crime, and historians interested in creativity. I will develop my leadership by convening a panel involving the CWs at the Social History Society Annual Conference in Summer 2019. Costs have been calculated for the SHS based on travel and accommodation within the UK and the conference fee (£40). This will be a key opportunity to explore the comparative potential of the research with other historians, and to discuss the creative dimensions of the project with a range of historians. Travelling to the Historical Fictions Research Network conference in 2020 to give a methodological paper will be another chance to discuss the creative collaborations undertaken during the project, and help to develop the methodological article which I will write at the end of the project.

Writing Workshops (2 x £3,150): The first workshop will bring together two invited historians, the CWs working on the project, two creative writers, Peter Hewitt from the Museum of Witchcraft, and a representative of the National Archives. The Brigstow Institute will provide the venue on the University of Bristol campus. Costs are included for travel and accommodation for the six invited speakers, a speaker’s fee of £300 each for the external creative writers (e.g. not the CWs on the project), and for refreshments for thirty people, allowing some capacity for audience participation.

The second workshop will bring together two invited historians, the CWs, two playwrights, and two representatives from the heritage sector, including Peter Hewitt from the Museum of Witchcraft and a representative of the Bristol Old Vic theatre. The Brigstow Institute will provide the venue on the University of Bristol campus. Costs are included for travel and accommodation for the six invited speakers, for speaker’s fees of £300 each for the external playwrights (e.g. not the CWs on the project), and for refreshments for thirty people, allowing some capacity for audience participation.

Mini-festival (£900): The two iterations of the mini-festival of theatre pieces and creative writing are essential to the project’s impact aims. The cost of running the mini-festival twice includes travel and accommodation for the three members of the project team to go to Boscastle, and travel and accommodation for Peter Hewitt from the Museum of Witchcraft to travel to Bristol.

Administrative Support (£843): A small sum is required for administrative support. In Year 1, the administrative assistant will help plan and organise travel for me, undertake day-to-day monitoring of the budget, and coordinate the induction of the CWs. The project therefore includes budget for 1.5 hours’ support per week, across the 44 working weeks of the year (= 66 hours total).

Translation Services (£1200): The project includes a budget for translating a short selection of French documents into English for the CWs to work from directly. These sources will be identified by me and the CWs during the development of the project.

Recruitment Costs (£990): This covers travel and subsistence expenses for interviewing up to three candidates each for each of the two CWs. Advertising will be limited to free email-lists and online platforms, including the Brigstow Institute’s mailing lists.
**Creative Histories of Witchcraft**

**Research Questions or Problems**

In legal, medical, and even spiritual terms, witchcraft should not have existed in nineteenth-century France.

Decriminalized in 1682, witchcraft was definitively excluded from legal consideration by the Revolutionary penal code of 1791, as a crime ‘created by superstition’.¹ The revised Napoleonic Penal Code of 1810 maintained this position, and remained in force until 1940, meaning that witchcraft had no official place in criminal procedure.² The medical context was no more favourable, as a growing consensus held that belief in witches was a delusion, an example of religious monomania, or demonomania.³ As psychiatry developed into an independent specialism, witchcraft was explained as hysteria, or neurasthenia.⁴ Over the nineteenth century support for the possibility of witchcraft even drained from the Catholic Church, as it grew more concerned with responding to the challenges of secularism and policing the boundaries of orthodox practice.⁵ This legal, medical, and religious scepticism reached its peak under the Third Republic (1870-1940), a regime that embodied the secular ideals that had been so important to republicanism since the 1790s, and made concerted efforts to repress supernatural practices.⁶ Yet across this whole period, large numbers of men and women believed that other humans could harm them using supernatural powers. The six hundred and fifty criminal cases involving witchcraft that I have already identified are a surprising testament to just how seriously many people took this belief during a period when the reality of witchcraft was dismissed by many legal, medical, and religious authorities. From 1791-1940, at least sixty-seven people were murdered as suspected witches. Many more were assaulted. Hundreds were successfully prosecuted for fraud and illegal medical practice for claiming to have the power to bewitch, or un-witch.

This project addresses two challenges around understanding this body of examples: brevity and empathy. How should historians understand and represent the brief accounts of individual trials, and how these scattered examples are related to one another? Behind the dense reports of each case lie more general patterns of envy and insecurity, silence and violence. How can we understand what motivated the men and women involved in the cases? How can these motivations be represented so that they make sense to audiences today? Even among researchers, witchcraft beliefs from the modern period can be hard to fathom. Familiarity with the early-modern witch hunts encourages a belief that we know what a ‘witch’ was. How can audiences be both surprised but sympathetic to alien beliefs? To answer these questions, the project will pioneer a creative collaboration between a poet, a playwright, and a researcher. What research and writing methods can academics learn from creative writing? How can academic histories emulate the brevity and resonance of poetic writing? What tools of dramatization can historians borrow to make witchcraft credible?

By organizing two workshops on short-form creative writing, theatre, and historical research, and a mini-festival of theatre and creative writing about witchcraft, the project will consolidate and develop my leading role in conversations between arts practitioners and academics. The project will catalyse work by historians interested in dramatizing their research, thereby setting the agenda for the emerging field of creative histories. It will lead to a collaborative portfolio of outputs co-authored with the two Creative Writers (CWs), as well as a crossover non-fiction book, academic article, and a methodological piece at the cutting edge of developing new creative approaches to historical research and dissemination.

**Research Context**

The Puzzle of Modern Witchcraft: Despite the hostility of the law, medicine, and the Church, the belief in witchcraft flourished in the nineteenth century, as newspaper sources covering criminal trials demonstrate. In the 1820s and 1830s, specialist publications such as the *Gazette des Tribunaux* regularly reported ten or fifteen cases a year from across France where witchcraft was at stake in legal arguments. With the explosion of cheap newspapers from the 1860s onwards, the numbers were even greater: in 1887 alone, the national newspapers covered seventeen different cases. Nor was there a marked decline in violence against witches: the 1920s were the bloodiest years of the period, with ten murders involving witchcraft, three cases of brutal assault, and two arson cases covered in the newspapers. Although witchcraft has not gone unnoticed by historians of this period, there is no overview of the cases as a whole, meaning that researches have often assumed the dramatic cases involving witchcraft declined dramatically towards the end of the nineteenth century.⁷ For historians such as Judith Devlin, Eugen Weber, Marie-Claude Denier, and Eloïse Mozzani, witchcraft was, above all, a rural ‘survival’, that had been swept away by the forces of ‘modernity’, including better transportation, education, and the legal system.⁸ Yet this did not happen. Instead, the criminal justice system hosted a range of cases connected to sorcery.
Criminal Justice: Although witchcraft was not a crime in this period, in practice it was implicated in a range of criminal offences, and not simply the crimes of fraud and illegal medical practice that historians have concentrated on in the modern context. Beyond violent crimes against witches and their property, witchcraft became involved in cases of theft and even slander. By the fin-de-siècle, discussions of witchcraft had become entangled with debates over hypnosis and criminal responsibility. Given this legal complexity, both historians and anthropologists have missed the opportunity to explore the dramatic effects on witchcraft of the changes to the justice system between 1791 and 1940. The eighteenth-century criminal courts were distant, expensive, and understaffed, and their procedures and decision-making were often arbitrary and difficult to challenge, especially for the poor. The reforms introduced by the French Revolutionaries in the 1790s were designed to democratize, rationalize, and centralize the courts, although historians disagree about how successful they were in the long run. Jacques-Guy Petit, for instance, is typical of the tradition of French legal history that emphasizes the imposition of the new criminal justice system onto the population, and sees the implementation of codification as a distinct model of legal reform, best represented by the ‘French system’. Others, such as Frédéric Chauvaud, have emphasized the resistance of ordinary citizens to legal structures with which they did not identify.

As historians including Katherine Taylor, Frédéric Chauvaud, Ruth Harris, and Aaron Freundschnuh have suggested, this struggle between the judiciary and the public turned the French courts into theatres for social conflict. Contemporaries were accustomed to discussing the theatrical skills of famous lawyers and draconian judges, but all of the participants in criminal trials played different roles in the contest over justice. The example of juries who ‘scandalously’ acquitted guilty defendants in defiance of laws they did not respect is well-known to historians of French crime, and even includes cases where murderers and arsonists were treated leniently because the jury sympathized with their belief in witchcraft. But there is much more to be said about how defendants, accusers, witnesses, and the public learned to play different roles in criminal trials involving witchcraft. Learning these new roles was partly a process of learning new languages to speak in court, drawn, for instance, from law and medicine, as well as occultism. But it was also partly a process of mobilizing the right emotional responses, from pity, to indignation, or even confusion, and, in many cases, laughter. There is a striking and unexplored incongruity between the often deadly serious material of courtroom dramas of witchcraft, and the hilarious atmosphere among the public audience. The witchcraft cases were not unusual in their theatricality, but the question of witchcraft raised specific issues about belief in court that went to the heart of questions about free will and the cultural gulf that supposedly separated educated Frenchmen from primitive superstition.

Anthropology: Anthropological methods have been a high road to understanding the alien worldviews of witchcraft believers. Rather than seeing cultural beliefs in witchcraft as backward victims of inevitable processes of modernization, anthropologists have pointed out that witchcraft conflicts are often inventive and imaginative responses to the challenges of ‘modernity’. Owen Davies, one of the few historians to take the modernity of witchcraft in France seriously, for instance, has pointed out that the ‘service magicians’ of the twentieth century found their services were required not just for the traditional problems with cattle, crops, and babies, but also for ‘bewitched cars and fridges’ or even ‘a possessed fax machine’. The anthropologist Jeanne Favret-Saada emphasized that witchcraft was able to mutate to deal with these new technologies and social problems because it was flexible, rather than dogmatic. Witchcraft, she argued, relies on possibility, doubt, and the unshakeable feeling that something was wrong. By actively participating, even becoming a specialist in ‘unwitching’ families who were afflicted by witchcraft, Favret-Saada entered into the sealed universe of meaning within which sorcery made sense. The experience left her convinced of the reality of witchcraft, at the very least in a psychological sense. What was less clear from the work of the anthropologists was how experiences of witchcraft had changed in the period between the early-modern witch hunt and the twentieth century. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are caught between the extensive historiography of the Witch Craze and the ethnographies of the late twentieth century.

Creativity: Creative writing can fill this gap, functioning like ethnography for the periods that historians cannot visit. A range of historians and other academics have recently shown renewed interest in creative methods and practices drawn from the visual arts, writing, and performance. The ‘Creative Histories’ conferences I co-organized with the StoryPast network in Sheffield (July 2016) and Bristol (July 2017) brought together researchers, performers, artists and writers interested in history as a creative practice. These events, which were funded by the British Academy, Bristol Institute for the Humanities and Arts, and Sheffield Hallam University, pushed beyond the obvious questions over historical fiction, to think about how a range of practices draw upon and influence history, including theatre, visual arts, film-making, and non-fiction writing.
‘Creative Histories of Witchcraft’ will take up where these events finish in 2018, building interest among historians and creative practitioners seeking collaborations. Rather than treating creativity as a way to turn research into entertaining outputs, what does it mean to embrace creative methods from the beginning of a project? These questions are especially pressing for the case of witchcraft. Academics have worried that the emotional investment of radical feminists and modern Wiccans has distorted this history, producing good stories that are academically unsound.\textsuperscript{13} Does this have to be the case? Ronald Hutton’s histories of the deep history of witchcraft and Wicca suggest on the contrary that there are ways to respect the emotional significance of these histories to modern communities while producing rigorous scholarship.\textsuperscript{24} The recent turn to creativity is a way to address the problems of brevity and empathy outlined above.

**Other Academic Beneficiaries:** This history does not belong to the distant past: some of the same issues around law and witchcraft remain pressing today in France. In 2016, for instance, an 82-year-old woman from the Corrèze region was assaulted by family members who believed she was a witch.\textsuperscript{25} While anthropologists and aid organizations have researched the modern histories of witchcraft in developing countries to alleviate contemporary conflicts, too little has been done to think about the recent history of French witchcraft beliefs, which continue to have tragic consequences. As Ronald Hutton has recently emphasized, education is imperative to help reduce violence against witches.\textsuperscript{26} So, too, is understanding. As folklorists have emphasized, education drives that fail to take vernacular beliefs seriously are doomed to failure.\textsuperscript{27} The creative engagement that the project will pioneer will suggest ways that historians render alien experiences meaningful to audiences today. The 2016 case belongs to a different context and different concerns, but it cannot be understood without understanding the modern history of crimes of witchcraft.

**Research Methods.** The project draws on digitized newspapers, case studies, and creative writing.

**Digitized Newspapers:** Newspapers are a necessary starting point for identifying criminal cases, since witchcraft is rarely mentioned in the catalogues of departmental judicial archives covering this period, as it was not a crime. In addition, the French court system during this period was oral, meaning that trial records consist of the documents prepared by the investigating judge, but no transcription of the trial itself.\textsuperscript{28} Although newspapers sometimes garbled court cases, they are the surest way to identify trials involving magic. Defining ‘witchcraft’ as cases involving people ‘who cause harm to others by mystical means’, I have systematically searched the longest-running specialist legal periodical, the *Gazette des Tribunaux* (1825+).\textsuperscript{29} Another twenty newspapers were selected from the digitized collections available on [www.gallica.bnf.fr](http://www.gallica.bnf.fr) to search using the same criteria. The publications were chosen to provide as much chronological and geographical coverage as possible, and a range of political positions.\textsuperscript{30} By the time the project starts, I will have consulted 1000/1600 pages of the search results for these sources.

These press sources give an impressionistic view of the common features of the cases, and will be the basis of an article on the prosopography and collective biographies of the people involved in witchcraft conflicts for *The Journal of Social History*.\textsuperscript{31} Preliminary research suggests some of the conclusions are surprising. While it is true that many of the cases occurred in the countryside, there were also plenty of crimes involving witchcraft in Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Rouen, and other large cities.\textsuperscript{32} Participants in conflicts over witchcraft were often well-educated. Some were even relatively wealthy. There are basic empirical questions about the age, gender, and socio-economic status of the people involved which challenge any easy assumptions about the continuation of an early-modern model of witchcraft connected to ideas about female sexuality. On the other hand, there are also important continuities in terms of the geographies of witch beliefs. As in the early-modern period, the Norman *bocage*, the Pyrenees, and Alsace-Lorraine were hotspots of witchcraft. French colonialism and the migration of extra-European populations to France did affect how witchcraft was perceived, but the majority of cases had their roots in home-grown magical traditions, even if they increasingly make reference to ideas drawn from elsewhere.

**Micro-historical Case Studies:** This big picture of the cases is the first step to understanding the survival and adaptation of witchcraft beliefs. However, the individual digitized newspaper sources are often extremely brief on specific details, providing suggestive and impressionistic accounts that will not give much insight into how and why people felt witchcraft was a real and pressing problem. This deeper contextual detail is available in the surviving criminal records, which often include extensive hand-written witness statements, as well as medical reports, indictments, and judgments. A first archival trip will include the four neighbouring departmental archives of Sarthe, Maine-et-Loire, Indre-et-Loire, and Vendée, which together account for sixty cases that have already been identified. The second trip I will take is to Paris, to consult the Archives départementales d’Yvelines (U and 42 L contain several cases), and the Archives Nationales AM 776-2720, 3947-5198, 5376-6531 (records of the Chambre criminelle of the Cour de cassation, 1847-1959), BB 19 (reports on the Cour de Cassation, the highest appeals court in France) and BB 20 (reports from the
magistrates responsible for the regional Cours d’assises, 1821-1865). Prior research in Strasbourg, Caen, Lille, Rouen, and Arras, funded by the University of Bristol Arts Faculty and a Past & Present postdoctoral fellowship suggests that detailed trial records only survive for a handful of these cases. The best-documented cases will provide the material for the microhistorical studies at the centre of the creative projects, providing the specific details that the writers will combine and juxtapose to provide novel insights. This collaborative work will in turn shape the book which I will finish after the project, which will use the example of one dramatic case to explore the dynamics of witchcraft conflicts from throughout the period.

Creative Collaboration: The project will demonstrate ways that creative methods can contribute to rigorous academic findings. ‘Creativity’ in this context refers to the specific methods that creative writers have developed, which arts-based researchers have summarized as a focus on ‘making’ and imaginative, intuitive and emotional forms of knowledge. Rather than seeing the relationship between traditional academic history methods and creative writing as ‘trench warfare’, Carlo Ginzburg has emphasized a situation of ‘reciprocal, hybrid borrowings’, as historians learn the tricks of realist fiction, and fiction writers embed their stories in careful research. Although many historians recognize the truth of this insight, it is rare to see it built into projects from the ground. As arts-based researchers have emphasized, creativity is not an add-on at the end of the project, but should be an ‘active part of the historical process at every stage’, from research to dissemination. This is why this project involves a creative collaboration from the very start. Although neither of the CWs will engage directly in any research, my research will be shaped by their questions. This collaboration will begin with a selection of primary sources and secondary readings, which will provide the prompts for the two CWs to develop their projects. The three of us will draft and workshop our pieces together over the lifespan of the project, and I will provide translated research materials for the CWs to develop their pieces. We will co-author an introduction to the portfolio of pieces, reflecting on the aims, processes, and outcomes of the project. We will meet once a month for a book group, taking turns to suggest creative and methodological readings. We will record our discussions with blog posts.

Creative Research Historiographical imagination works with known facts, not instead of them. To suggest that creative writing is like ethnography for the periods historians cannot visit is not to suggest that it allows researchers to invent whatever they like. Academics who have explored creativity have emphasized that ‘creativity’ is rarely about wholesale invention, and instead involves using existing material in new ways. Creative writers can help historians exercise their imagination by bringing different kinds of attention to a subject. The dramatic potential of research, for instance, has been explored by a range of historians and heritage professionals who have turned research into performances. But how do dramatizations change the research questions a historian asks? When trying to write a realistic account of a scene in a tavern from the 1925 case which the book will concentrate on, for instance, I was struck by the fact that I could not easily say how the men there would have ordered a drink. Was there a bar, or table service? Did the customers pay in cash, or run a debt? These are not the kinds of detail that are readily available in the primary sources. They seemed too obvious and unimportant to the witnesses at the subsequent trial would explain to the police, because there was no need. But the scene in the tavern was a crucial turning point in a village conflict over trust, neighbourhood, and community. This was just as much about how men might share a drink with one another as it was about accusations of magical harm. The questions a playwright might ask in order to turn this material into a piece of theatre can help a historian think about the unspoken assumptions behind witchcraft conflicts, and this creative collaboration fosters better research, as well as creative outputs.

Empathy: Working with creative practitioners will be a way to reverse-engineer the realism of witchcraft disputes, not only for the purposes of impact, but also to address academic research questions about how people came to believe what they did. Poetry and theatre invite different kinds of engagement with research materials than academic writing does, evoking emotional responses as well as intellectual engagement. Helen Kara has emphasized the special value that arts-based research, including creative writing, has for ‘honouring eliciting and expressing cultural ways of knowing’ and for ‘exploring sensitive topics’, such as issues that evoke heightened emotions. Sidestepping the rules of academic writing can be a way to work around ingrained assumptions about what witchcraft is, directing attention away from popular cultural stereotypes built on the early modern trials, and towards the historically-specific emotional realities of the fear of witchcraft. Witchcraft survives because it remains realistic to people, but the only way to explain this convincingly is to invite audiences into a demonstration of what witchcraft feels like.

Brevity: The final strand of the creative collaboration addresses the problems of fragmentary narratives and sources inherent in this topic by exploring brief source material in short writing forms, such as poetry. Despite the proliferation of history blogs, the success of popular history books constructed around brief sections, and initiatives by academic journals seeking novel forms of short contribution, short-form writing
remains surprisingly under-theorised among academic historians. On the other hand, poetry is such a well-established research method in the social sciences, that there are over forty different terms for poetry as research. A poem, in the words of Patricia Leavy, is ‘a snippet of human experience that is artistically expressed in a heightened state’. Historians can mimic the evocative emotional powers of poetry, using short forms to leave ‘interpretative gaps’ that invite readers in. Poems aspire to speak globally through fragmentary examples. They offer ways to think about the broader implications of the partial sources that survive concerning these cases of modern witchcraft. Poetic thinking will allow me to explore the resonance and power of individual examples, such as the case from 1925 that my book will narrate.

Leadership Development Plans. The project will develop my leadership profile in several ways.  
1. The project will provide me with experience of coproducing work with creative practitioners. This will also provide opportunities for two creative practitioners to develop their interests in research-based creative writing, and will serve as a field-defining model for future projects.  
2. I will build on the success of the ‘Creative Histories’ network which I cofounded. In 2017-8 I hold a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award which has funded three events on creative writing, co-produced research, and creative histories. The two workshops and the mini-festival at the end of this project will bring together researchers and practitioners to continue these conversations. The project will also take launch new collaborations with the Museum of Witchcraft and the University of Bristol’s Brigstow Institute.  
3. The project will establish me as the leading historian of witchcraft in nineteenth-century France. As a coordinator of the ‘New Directions in French History’ initiative since 2015, supported by the Society for the Study of French History, I will continue to organize events and give talks. The book based on the project will be based on almost ten years of work, including digital and archival research, and will establish my reputation both as a leading historian of France in the UK, and as a public historian.  
4. I will continue to draw on the support of Professor Ronald Hutton at the University of Bristol, who is not only a leading authority on the long history of witchcraft, but has extensive experience as a public historian, working with the sensitive issues of witchcraft and modern Paganism.  
5. I will continue to disseminate my research at international conferences, such as the Social History Society and the Historical Fictions Research Network conference.  
6. I will make use of the staff training for leadership that is available at the University of Bristol, such as the course ‘Stepping Into Leadership’, as well as regular meetings with my AHRC Fellowship mentor Tim Cole in Bristol. As I develop the project, I will draw on Professor Cole’s experience coordinating the Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol, which focuses on bringing arts and humanities researchers together with interdisciplinary collaborators and external partners.

Technical Summary. This project does not involve digital outputs or technologies.

Project Management. I will devote 1.0 FTE to the project in Year 1 and 0.2 in Year 2. As PI, I will lead the team and take overall responsibility for project management, including recruiting the two CWs, and meeting with them fortnightly to work on the creative projects. During the first year, I will finish analysing the digitized newspapers, and use this research to produce an article on the prosopography of the witchcraft cases. I will also complete the archival research into the case studies which will inform the work of the CWs. During the final six months of the project, I will write a methodological article, finish the book proposal based on the project, and organize a panel at the Historical Fictions Research Network conference.

The two CWs will be recruited for one year at 1.0 FTE on Grade I through standard university recruitment practices. With my help, they will establish a Personal Career Development Plan based on their specific training needs, which will be monitored at regular intervals and developed throughout the project. I will mentor them on a quarterly basis. During the first year of the project, the CWs will plan and develop their creative outputs, and attend the two workshops on short-form creative writing and theatre. At the mini-festivals in Boscastle and Bristol, the CWs and I will present reflections on creative-academic collaboration for the project. The CWs will network with the non-academic partners at the events held at the Museum of Witchcraft. The Faculty of Arts at the University has experience helping writers with career development, having employed Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellows for several years. More recently, two positions in Creative Writing have been created within the Faculty, meaning that the CWs will benefit from a support network of practitioners with related interests. They will also have access to the support offered by the Staff Development Department, which offers an array of courses and career development advice.

The Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle will provide performance space for the mini-festival and accompanying discussions, and help to publicise the events. The Brigstow Institute at the University of
Bristol will provide administrative support for organizing the workshops on short-form writing, theatre, and the mini-festival reflecting on the project. All four events will be open to interested academic researchers and creative practitioners, and not just historians of witchcraft. The Institute has built up a network of collaborators in the recent creative industries in Bristol and the southwest, and will use this network to publicise the events and lay the groundwork for future collaborations. I will also use this network to recruit the CWs.

**Dissemination.** With the support of the Briggstow Institute, I will hold two workshops and a mini-festival connected to the project. The first workshop will address the use of short-form writing by creative writers and historians, and the second will explore questions of dialogue and performance among theatre practitioners and historians. These two workshops in Bristol will involve a total of ten invited participants, including representatives from the Museum of Witchcraft, the National Archives, and a range of university and heritage researchers and arts practitioners contacted through the ‘Creative Histories’ network and the Briggstow Institute. Together with the CWs, I will organize a panel on the project for the Social History Society annual conference in 2019, and I will present a paper looking back on the project at the Historical Fictions Research Network conference in 2020.

We will run the mini-festival at the end of the project twice: once in Bristol, and once at the Museum of Witchcraft. It will feature presentations from me along with the two CWs on the mechanics and practicalities of creative-academic collaborations. The StoryingthePast blog will host posts from participants in all three events, which will extend the ‘Creative Histories’ blog series of twenty one posts from the events in 2017-8, and build towards the methodological article for *History Workshop Journal*.

The CWs will develop a portfolio of creative pieces drawing on the research and collaborative work undertaken during the project. For the playwright, this will take the form of a short (<60 minutes) script, or collection of shorter pieces. For the other CWF, this will be around 20,000 words of prose, or around 15 short poems (>one page), or a mixture of the two. All three of us will co-author an introduction to these pieces, and submit the portfolio to *Rethinking History*. There will be readings from the portfolio at the mini-festival held at the Museum of Witchcraft and Bristol, but a full performance of the play is not envisaged.

I will finish a non-fiction crossover book after the fellowship, to be submitted to an agent by 2023. The book will contribute to the tradition of non-fiction books and popular histories which make use of the techniques of novel-writing, including dialogue, suspense, brevity, and the first-person perspective. Like Andrew Hankinson’s recent non-fiction account of the murderer Raoul Moat’s final days, the book will put the reader inside an alien and often shocking perspective, to outline the parameters of a worldview where witchcraft is deadly serious. The book will tell the true story of one case, drawing as far as possible on the extensive court records and newspaper accounts that survive. But it will also engage in imaginative reconstruction grounded in the wider research from the project. Research into hundreds of other cases will allow me to say what probably or possibly happened, in between the gaps and absences of the sources that deal with this specific case. With the help of the agent, I will send the book to an independent publisher with a track record of publishing non-fiction, such as Bloomsbury.

I will also produce two articles. The first will outline the prosopography of individuals involved in witchcraft cases. The broad scope andreadership of *The Journal of Social History* make it an appropriate venue for this important scene-setting piece, which I will finish by 2019. The second article from the project will be a methodological piece on creative collaboration, which I will submit to *History Workshop Journal*, which both takes an interest in collaborative and creative work, and reaches a wide audience of historians. This piece will provide a field-defining exploration of the possibilities of creative collaborations, establishing my role as a leading researcher in this emerging area.

**Statement of Eligibility.** I completed my doctorate in 2014. By September 2018, I will have four years of postdoctoral experience researching and teaching in fields related to the project, including three years as a salaried member of staff at the University of Bristol on an open-ended contract. Between 2010-6 I have established a track record of publications on related topics, including peer-reviewed articles for leading journals, as well as forthcoming articles connected to this research, on urban witchcraft in Paris in the nineteenth century and witchcraft and criminal laws concerning reputation after 1789.

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2. The Code remained in force until 1994, but the project ends in 1940 to avoid the issues of the Occupation.
of the case of a servant ‘hypothesised’ by a ‘witch’ and persuaded to commit infanticide. 

Le Temps 4th August 1890.


This pithy definition is from Rodney Needham, cited in: Hutton, The Witch; See also Ronald Hutton, “Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a New Collaboration?,” The Historical Journal 47, no. 2 (June 2004): 413–34.

The earliest publication are Le Journal des Tribunaux (1791–2) and Le Journal de l’Empire (1805+). Outside Paris, I include L’Ouest Éclair et L’Echo d’Algers. The political positions span the right-wing populism of La Croix (1880+), through the centre-right Le Figaro (1854+) and Le Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires (1814+), the socialist L’Humanité (1904+), and the radical La Lanterne (1877+) to the politically ambiguous big popular press, such as Le Journal (1892+) and Le Petit Journal (1863+). The remaining publications are Le Courrier des Tribunaux (1827–30), La Justice (1880+), Le Matin (1882+), Le Petit Parisien (1876+), Le Populaire (1918+), La Presse (1836+), Le Radical (1881–1931), Le Rappel (1869-1933) and Le Temps (1861+).


Kara, Creative Research Methods, 12-3.

Carlo Ginzburg, Threads and Traces (2012), 2.


For instance, David Gauntlett, Making is Connecting (2011, 4), Kara Creative Research Methods, 11.

This insight is common to many works on arts-based research. See Leavy, Methods Meets Art, Kara, Creative Research Methods, and Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds.), Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry, (2007).

Kara, Creative Research Methods, 24.

For a recent perspective from creative writing, see: Roy Peter Clark, How to Write Short: Word Craft for Fast Times (2014).

Kara, Creative Research Methods, 5.

Leavy, Method Meets Art, 78 (on poems as snippets), 56 (on interpretative gaps), 92-4, (an example) 85-9.
A recent example is Kate Summerscale’s *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher* (2008).

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**Education**


2009-2010 Utah State University, MA in Folklore, 4.0 GPA.


2003-2007 University of Oxford, BA in Modern History and French, 1st Class Honours.

**Academic Positions and Teaching Experience**

2015- Fellow in the Higher Education Academy


2010-2013 Admissions interviewer for Oriel College.

2009-2010 Graduate Instructor, Utah State University.

**Publications**

2018 Singing the Changes: Cultural Traditions of the Body in Nineteenth-Century France, OUP, (forthcoming)


2017 Rhythms of Revolt: European Traditions and Memories of Social Conflict in Oral Culture, Éva Guillorel, David Hopkin, and William G. Pooley (eds.).


2010 'Independent Women and Independent Body Parts: What the Tales and Legends of Nannette Lévesque can Contribute to French Rural Family History,' Folklore, 121:2.

**Prizes, Scholarships, and Grants**

2017-8 British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award for ‘Creative Histories’ conference and workshops.


2010-2013 AHRC Block Grant Partnership Studentship, University of Oxford.

2009-2010 Fife Fellowship in Folklore, Utah State University.

2008 Folklore Society's President’s Prize.
Social Media
2015- Co-founder of #storypast history virtual reading club https://storyingthepast.wordpress.com
2015- Co-editor of French History Network Blog, focusing on ‘New Directions in French History’ http://frenchhistorysociety.co.uk/blog/?page_id=204
2013- Blog on history and folklore: https://williamgpooley.wordpress.com with over 220 followers, and 6,500 unique page views. Twitter: @willpooley

Administrative Experience
July 2017- Jan 2018 British Academy Rising Star Engagement events on the theme of ‘Creative Histories’, including conference (July 2017), workshop on creativity and coproduction (November 2017) and public conversation on creative writing and history with authors Kate Summerscale and Sarah Perry.
May 2015 Co-organiser: Colloquium: The History of the Body: Approaches and Directions, Institute of Historical Research, London, co-funded by the Institute of Historical Research, the Society for the Social History of Medicine, and the Royal Historical Society.
April 2015 Co-organiser: Conference: Empty Spaces, Institute of Historical Research, London, co-funded by the Historical Geography Research Group, the Institute of Historical Research, and the History Department, Vanderbilt University.
2010-2011 Convenor: Gender and History Forum, University of Oxford
2010-2011 Designed and led graduate workshop: The Writing of History
List of Publications


**‘The Singing Postman: the Mobility of Traditional Culture in Nineteenth-Century France’, *Cultural and Social History*, 2016.**


**‘Can the “Peasant” Speak? Witchcraft and Silence in Guillaume Cazaux’s “The Mass of Saint Sécaire”’, *Western Folklore*, 71:2, 2012.**
LETTER OF SUPPORT: AHRC ‘Creative Histories of Witchcraft’

‘Creative Histories of Witchcraft’ is an exciting new project that will integrate academic research into modern witchcraft trials with artistic endeavours such as creative writing, drama and performance. The Museum is excited to collaborate on this project as we believe it will benefit our visiting public (some 50,000 visitors came to the Museum in 2017) and will be of wider scholarly and cultural importance.

This project coincides with the Museum’s own wider institutional aims, i.e., to explore the history of magic, and to represent the diversity and vigour of magical practice. We aim to do this respectfully, accurately and impartially through unique, entertaining and educational exhibitions and collaborative projects, drawing upon the insights of magical practitioners and cutting-edge scholarship.

I can wholeheartedly support this bid – the dramatization of witch-trials is an emotionally engaging way of exploring a complex subject and presenting this material to the public. In addition, we know from experience that this approach works. In 2016 the Museum of Witchcraft & Magic teamed up with Circle of Spears Productions to stage a play (‘Witch’) that examined folk magic practice and the causes of witchcraft accusations in early modern Cornwall. The play, although only a small production, reached an audience of 200+ people and was a platform for other projects and exhibitions within the Museum.

For this project the Museum will supply in kind:

- performance space in the library in the Museum (worth about £1000)
• research facilities, including archive and library access for project partners (£500)
• media coverage via our own social media networks and our Friends of the Museum organisation (we currently have a dedicated mailing list of 1000 people, a twitter account of 14,000 followers and a facebook page that routinely receives 30,000 views a week.
• We can also provide exhibition space for any further outcomes of the project (and a potential audience of 50,000 visitors)

I am positive that with William Pooley’s leadership on this project that it has the potential to bring academic research to new audiences. I hope that you will fund this project and bring a hitherto unexplored aspect of European cultural history to light for the many.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Peter Hewitt

Collections Researcher, Archivist and Co-Manager, Museum of Witchcraft & Magic in Boscastle
Pathways to Impact
The project addresses important questions about combining creative practices with original research which are targeted towards two key groups of non-academic beneficiaries:

1. arts organizations and local museums;
2. contemporary pagans.

The project will make use of the Brigstow Institute’s established network of partner artists and arts organizations to continue conversations from the 2017-8 British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award on ‘Creative Histories’. Past events included a conference in July 2017, a workshop on ‘Creativity and Coproduction’ involving academics and community groups, and a workshop and public lecture on ‘Creative Writing and History’.

The project will be of particular interest to the contemporary pagan community, who have proven open-minded and engaged with respect to the history of witchcraft beliefs. It will explore creative but true ways of imagining the history of modern witchcraft.

Methods of communication and engagement
Workshops The project will engage with stakeholders in the arts and museum sector through the two workshops on dramatizing historical research and on short-form creative historical writing, organized in tandem with the Brigstow Institute. As an organization bringing together researchers from different disciplines together with non-academic partners to produce new kinds of knowledge, the Institute will play an important role in publicising the project events and in attracting collaborators and participants. For the first workshop on short-form creative writing, I will invite researchers involved in the ‘Creative Histories’ network who are working on creative writing and history, including Catherine Fletcher, Sophie Couloumbeau, and Laura Tisdall, as well as the ‘Creative Histories’ group within the Faculty of Arts at the University of Bristol. I will also invite local archives and museum and heritage organizations, including the Bristol Records Office and the recently relaunched Bristol Historical Association, and creative writers working both within the two Bristol universities, and meeting in more informal groups. The workshop will develop practical answers to the questions, which will be applied to the witchcraft research: how do creative writers and historians write succinctly? How can historical writing be brief, resonant, and even poetic? Why should it be? What opportunities and problems can this offer heritage organizations, researchers, and artists working together?

For the second workshop, I will invite other individuals and groups who are already working in the area of dramatized historical research, including Iqbal Husain, who has produced short pieces based on archival sources in his work for the National Archives, and Professor David Turner of Swansea University, who collaborated with Wattle and Daub Theatre in Bristol on their production of the puppet show The Surprising Appetites of Tarrare the Freak. Circle of Spears Productions, Iqbal Husain, and David Turner are all already involved in the ‘Creative Histories’ events, but the workshop will also be an opportunity to involve organizations local to Bristol, including the Old Vic, the Bristol Record Office, and the Bristol University Theatre Collections. Given the abundance of reported speech in historical sources, why do historians so infrequently use dialogue and dramatization? How do dramatists bring speech to life? Can historians borrow dramatic techniques without sacrificing their commitment to factual accuracy? The workshop will address questions of best practice in collaborations between academic researchers, heritage organizations and archives, and artists practitioners, and develop practical guidelines for future collaborations.

Blog The project will make use of the StoryingthePast blog to coordinate the monthly reading group organized with the two Creative Writers (CWs), and to disseminate short reflective pieces about the processes of creative writing and theatre-writing, similar to the series of over twenty blog posts I have edited in October-December 2017 on the themes of the ‘Creative Histories’ events. The StoryingthePast blog continues to engage a range of non-academics who are

2 Such as: http://bristolwritersgroup.com/about-bwg/
interested in history, and has hosted both comments and blog posts from non-academic practitioners and interested non-specialists, with new posts typically receiving 1-200 views.

Public Engagement A public engagement mini-festival is the centrepiece of the project, and is particularly targeted towards the modern pagan community. While there will not be a rehearsed performance of the dramatic pieces, they will be developed after the end of the project, with the aim to stage a production. Along with the Museum of Witchcraft and the Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol, I will organize two iterations of a mini-festival of short pieces of theatre and creative writing on the theme of witchcraft. This one-day event will run once in Boscastle, at the Museum of Witchcraft, and once in Bristol, hosted by the Brigstow Institute, whose purpose is to encourage inter-disciplinarity and ‘co-produced research with – and not just for – external partners’.

The Museum is an important venue for engaging with the contemporary pagan community, regularly attracting large numbers of visitors interested in paganism, and organizing events that span academic research and community engagement. In September 2017, for instance, Circle of Spears Productions and the Museum of Witchcraft collaborated to organize a day of talks on ‘the wayside witch’ including academic talks and a performance of the original play ‘WITCH’. The author of the play, Tracey Norman, has talked of how important it was to her that the representation of historical witchcraft in the play made sense to contemporary practitioners, and reflected some of their own questions about the history of witchcraft beliefs. A mini-festival on creative approaches to witchcraft will build on the existing work the Museum does with the contemporary pagan community by communicating a range of historical viewpoints, including the nineteenth-century French examples, which are unlikely to be well-known to the Museum’s audience. How can the modern pagan movement come to terms with the violence and criminality of the recent past? And how can their own viewpoints inform sensitive historical representations of witchcraft? The second iteration of this event, hosted by the Brigstow Institute will be an opportunity to engage in similar ways with the Bristol Pagan community, who numbered 770+ in 2011.3

Book The book that I will finish after the end of the project will reflect the creative elements that are built into the project. The book will take the form of a 70,000 word non-fiction novel, following one case as it unfolded within a community, using the wider research on the project to imagine the unknowable events around a murder in the 1920s. As a topic, witchcraft has always had the potential to interest a range of audiences beyond the academy, and there are several examples of more-or-less rigourous academic books on witchcraft that have succeeded in appealing to a wider readership.4 By developing the dramatic and creative pieces with the CWs, I will develop a book that is academically rigourous, but also playful, open to possibilities, and vivid and dramatic. Working with organizations such as the Museum of Witchcraft and trialling the ideas of the project in the mini-festival of theatre is also a way to engage with the interests and concerns of the contemporary pagan community in the final book. I will submit the book to Bloomsbury, who have a track record of producing crossover, non-fiction books.

Resources for impact activities
The Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle will provide performance space for the first iteration of the mini-festival of creative writing and drama about witchcraft. The Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol will provide space and administrative support for the workshop on short-form creative writing, the workshop on dramatizing research, and for the second iteration of the mini-festival. These events therefore have no resource implications for the project. In addition, the Brigstow Institute will advertise the events to their network of artists and arts organizations as part of the university’s commitment to fostering impact.


4 For instance: Margaret Alice Murray, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921). Murray’s arguments are not widely accepted by historians today. For work that is both academically-respected and popular with a wide readership, see: Hutton, The Triumph of the Moon.
Work Plan attachment
I will commit 1.0 FTE to the project for the first twelve months, and 0.2 FTE for the remaining six months, plus donated time. During the first months of the project, I will complete the digitized newspaper research and write the article on the prosopography of witchcraft cases. In December 2018 and March 2019 I will conduct research trips to France. From April 2019 onwards, I will finish a sample chapter of the book. I will use the last six months of the project to finish the book proposal and write a methodological article on the project.

The Creative Writers (CWs) will commit 1.0 FTE to the first twelve months of the project. The CWs will spend most of the first year producing short portfolios of creative work, supported by research and translated documents that I will provide. They will spend the last six weeks of their fellowships producing reflective reports on the project. All three core team members will read and workshop all of the writing produced during the first twelve months.

I will remain in contact with my mentor, Professor Tim Cole, throughout the Fellowship period (see mentor statement). After the project has finished, I will donate time to finish the remaining book chapters, to be submitted to an agent by 2023.