

CAL Undergraduate Research Scholarships Scheme 2017
Project Proposal Form

Project Proposer/s:	Dr Tara Hamling
School/Dept:	History and Cultures / History
Project Title:	Early English Wall Paintings Database
Project Summary	
<p>The project will create a new, searchable database of English wall paintings to consolidate, support and advance my research on early modern decorative arts. Wall paintings are one of the most significant categories of vernacular visual art of the period c.1500-c.1650, depicting a range of patterns, motifs and narratives. Despite their ubiquity in the period and significance as evidence of status and identity at the middling level, wall paintings have not yet received the recognition they deserve. This is partly because of their presence in relatively modest private houses, creating barriers to information and access.</p> <p>In 2014 the first English Wall Painting symposium held in Oxford identified the pressing need for some basic data collation to record known examples of extant wall painting throughout the country in case of further loss of material as well as information. There is no authoritative survey or catalogue of extant work and records of known examples are scattered throughout obscure antiquarian sources or absorbed within massive repositories such as the English Heritage architectural archives. There is no shortcut to finding information - locating paintings involves slow, systematic and painstaking searches through specific categories of published and archival material.</p> <p>Creating a database will serve two functions. First and foremost, it will serve as a data management tool to transfer, collate, organise and extend my own research files and notes. This will support preparatory work towards my next monograph project on the visual culture of early modern England. Secondly, it will provide a transferable resource of documentation, which could be made available in due course to other researchers, possibly through the CREMs web portal, to encourage and support new research on this important but neglected category of Tudor and Stuart vernacular art.</p>	
What the researcher will do	
<p>Create a database using Excel or Access to hold various data on English wall paintings of the period 1500-1650, making sure that key data is searchable.</p> <p>Work through the substantial antiquarian literature documenting discoveries of wall paintings, entering each example –its address, location, subject matter, inscription etc) within the core database.</p> <p>Work systematically through the Red Box collection of the National Monuments Record, now digitised as ‘England’s Places’ (English Heritage): https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/) This involves working by county then parish, searching visual materials held on buildings of historical interest, entering each example of wall painting within the core database.</p>	
Skills required by the Scholarship holder	
<p>Ability to conduct primary research using online archives and databases, and data analysis</p> <p>Ability to create databases and entering data, ideally using Excel or Access</p>	

Ability to locate, read and extract relevant information from antiquarian literature

Familiarity with the study of visual arts is desirable but not essential

How will your Project benefit the Scholarship holder?

The project will provide the student with an opportunity to design and develop a new, searchable database with a tangible end product.

The project may require training in creation of databases (Excel and/or Access) available through the University that will give the student valuable skills training.

The work will develop a range of research skills alongside key technical skills in database work that are central to academic research but also highly transferable and so will increase employability.

How will the Scholarship benefit your Project?

The scholarship will create a database to provide an essential research tool to collate, organise and structure information about primary source material allowing easy searching by keyword to locate relevant examples and details as well as enabling cross-referencing of material.

The database will underpin my analysis of vernacular visual art to inform my next monograph project on the visual culture of early modern England.

In due course the database could be used to foster collaboration and research networks leading to research grant bids.

