

The Leverhulme Trust
APPLICATION FORM – International Academic Fellowship

Applicant: Dr Alaric Hall	ID/Ref: IAF-2013-011
Project Title: Constructing crisis: Icelandic cultural responses to the 2008 financial crisis	

Applicant Details

Submission Date:	08/11/2012
Total Requested:	20,531

General Details

Title	Dr	Gender	Male
First Name(s)	Alaric	Date of Birth	13/01/1979
Surname	Hall		

Contact Details

Department	School of English		
Institution	University of Leeds		
Address	Woodhouse Lane	Telephone Number	0113 343 4761
	Leeds United Kingdom (England) LS2 9JT	Email	alaric@cantab.net

Career Details

Employment

Employment 1	08/2007 To
Job Title:	Lecturer in medieval English literature
Employer:	University of Leeds

Employment 2	08/2005 To 08/2007
Job Title:	Research fellow
Employer:	Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki

Education Details

Degree/Qualifications

Degree 1	09/2000 To 09/2001
Degree/Qualification : Subject	MPhil : Medieval Studies
Institution:	University of Glasgow

Degree 2	09/1997 To 06/2000
Degree/Qualification : Subject	BA : Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic
Institution:	Cambridge University

Doctoral Degrees

Degree 1	09/2001 To 09/2004
Degree/Qualification : Institution	PhD : University of Glasgow
Title of Thesis:	The meanings of <u>_elf_</u> and elves in Anglo-Saxon England
Supervisor Name:	Graham Caie and Kathryn Lowe

Title of proposal	Constructing crisis: Icelandic cultural responses to the 2008 financial crisis
Main/sub field of study	Non-English Languages and Literatures, Anthropology

Abstract

I will spend six months in Iceland, developing skills in a discipline new to me: contemporary ethnography. I will research how Icelanders have responded culturally to the 2008 financial crisis, focusing on how popular culture related to the crisis has been apprehended, developed and supplemented in everyday Icelandic discourses on and personal conceptualisations of the crisis. This work will both draw on and hone my existing conversational proficiency in modern Icelandic. The project will produce a research article, but more importantly will underpin a long-term commitment to developing research and research-led teaching of Icelandic language and culture in the UK.

Place(s) overseas where you will carry out the proposed activities

Reykjavík, Iceland

Relevant experience/skills/training

I spent my first research leave as a lecturer at Leeds in Iceland (July-December 2010) researching manuscripts of medieval romance-sagas. However, building on my knowledge of Old Norse and the proficiency in Swedish which I gained while working in Finland (2005-7), I also took the opportunity to gain proficiency in conversational Modern Icelandic, on which I will build in the Fellowship. My acquisition of new skills in the field of ethnology/folkloristics is underpinned by my previous work on the historical anthropology of the Middle Ages. This gives me a theoretical basis from which to acquire new methodologies in ethnological research.

Detailed Proposal and Publications

Detailed statement of proposed activities

File: Proposed Research

Background

Two UK universities offer credit-bearing courses in modern Icelandic: UCL and Leeds. Modern Icelandic has been taught at Leeds since the 1920s, giving staff and graduates of the University an important role in mediating Icelandic culture in Britain. This project will sustain and develop that tradition—one which is important partly because of Iceland's centuries-long heritage of economic and cultural ties to the UK, stretching from the Viking Age to twenty-first century investment banking and popular music. Meanwhile, Iceland also stands as a case study of micro-states in a globalising world. For both reasons, it offers valuable comparisons for understanding British culture, and specifically Britain's own recent experience of financial crisis.

My own background is in the historical anthropology of medieval Britain, with long-standing interests in medieval Scandinavia. Appointed to this field in Leeds in 2007, I also replaced both of the University's Icelandic specialists. I have therefore developed a new research profile in medieval Icelandic, focusing on romance-sagas and their transmission from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, and through this spending time in Iceland and gaining proficiency in modern Icelandic. I would use my International Academic Fellowship to build on both my ability in modern Icelandic and on my expertise in medieval folklore to develop a new research profile in contemporary Icelandic culture, as a basis for research-led teaching in this field in the UK.

Objectives and methods

1. To become fluent in modern Icelandic.

I am proficient in reading and conversation in modern Icelandic. However, to achieve fast reading and fluent speech, I need a depth of exposure which cannot be acquired in the UK. I will achieve this by living with an Icelandic family (to be arranged through the University of Iceland's international outreach office, the Stofnun Sigurðar Nordals), and taking an active role in the life of the Department of Social Anthropology and Folkloristics and the Árni Magússon Institute for Icelandic Studies at the University of Iceland. Full participation in family and working life in Iceland will dramatically enhance my understanding of Icelandic culture, supporting objectives (2) and (3).

2. To acquire new skills in contemporary cultural/anthropological research.

My research on medieval North-West Europe has focused on historical anthropology/folklore, giving me a good understanding of theoretical frameworks in this area. Through an International Academic Fellowship, however, I would move my research into the new discipline of contemporary ethnology/folkloristics. I will participate in research and doctoral training seminars at the Department of Social Anthropology and Folkloristics, and benefit from the mentorship of Professor Terry Gunnell there. Drawing on the expertise of my Icelandic colleagues in ensuring ethical practice, selecting and interviewing informants, and interpreting the data gathered will be mutually supportive of objective (1) above, will structure the qualitative ethnological research described under (3) below, provide new methodological perspectives for my research on medieval culture, and underpin future research-led teaching on contemporary Icelandic culture.

3. To research cultural responses to the 2008 financial crisis.

In 2010, I published a translation of a medieval Icelandic romance at the same time as the Icelandic novelist Bjarni Harðarson took that text as a basis for a novel satirising the Icelandic financial sector. Invited to deliver the 2011 Beck lectures on Icelandic literature at the University of Victoria in Canada, I gave one of my lectures on this literary response to the financial crisis, and have since begun systematically to engage with cultural production in this area. However, I have found that deeper engagement with Icelandic culture is required to apprehend and analyse many of the references and resonances of this material.

With the support described in (2) above, I will develop a focused, qualitative research project studying how Icelanders have responded to journalism, comedy, film, music and writing to conceptualise the 2008 financial crisis. These media have both participated in dense intertextual networks and contributed in everyday life to new turns of phrase, anecdotes, jokes, and even children's games. While cultural dimensions of the crisis have enjoyed some investigations (e.g. Kristín Loftsdóttir 2010), there is still extensive scope for understanding how people have constructed their understanding of the crisis—not least because popular culture has been important in mediating between the personal experience of the crisis (visceral for some, marginal for others) and intellectual understandings of the often abstruse and complex economic and political structures which brought the crisis about. I will take advice on focusing my research on a manageably specific demographic.

As Chartier (2010) has argued, Iceland's extreme financial crisis of 2008 was both unique and instructive, but has not been well understood or reported by international media, making mediation of the Icelandic experience through academic research particularly important. I look forward to taking a step towards this through primary research, broad dissemination of my findings, and longer-term developments of the study produced during this fellowship.

Outcomes

- An article on the roles of popular culture in the cultural construction of financial crisis in Iceland, to be submitted to *Current Anthropology* (with the expectation of concomitant free-access publication via the Leeds University digital repository).
- A much enhanced ability to teach modern Icelandic. I will revise, extend, and promote a free-access Modern Icelandic mp3 course which I have developed to a beta-version (http://www.alarichall.org.uk/teaching/modern_icelandic.php). This has already revolutionised Icelandic teaching at Leeds and has been widely downloaded by members of the public.
- My enhanced understanding of Icelandic culture will feed directly into my undergraduate teaching, into the 'continuing education' workshops on Scandinavian language and culture I run at Leeds, and the regular public lectures which I deliver around the UK.

Works cited

Chartier, Daniel, *The End of Iceland's Innocence: The Image of Iceland in the Foreign Media During the Financial Crisis*, trans. by Daniel Chartier (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010) [first publ. *La spectaculaire dérouté de l'Islande: L'image de l'Islande à l'étranger durant la crise économique de 2008* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2010)].

Kristín Loftsdóttir, 'The Loss of Innocence: The Icelandic Financial Crisis and Colonial Past', *Anthropology Today*, 26.6 (December 2010), 9–13.

Major publications

File: Publications

Alaric Hall, major publications

monographs

- 1 *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*, Anglo-Saxon Studies, 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007; pbk repr. 2009).

edited books

- 2 *Interfaces between Language and Culture in Medieval England: A Festschrift for Matti Kilpiö*, ed. by Alaric Hall, Olga Timofeeva, Ágnes Kiricsi and Bethany Fox, The Northern World, 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

articles in journals

submitted

- 3 'Sigrgarðs saga frækna: A Normalised Text, Translation, and Introduction', submitted to *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*; working paper at http://www.alarichall.org.uk/sigrgards_saga_article.pdf [38,651 words].
- 4 'Making Stemmas with Small Samples: Testing the Stemma of *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, and New Media Approaches to Publishing Stemmas', submitted to *Digital Medievalist*; working paper at http://www.alarichall.org.uk/working_paper_on_stemmas_from_small_samples/ [14,212 words].

published

- 5 lead author, with Haukur Þorgeirsson *et al.*, 'Sigurðar saga fóts (The Saga of Sigurðr Foot): A Translation', *Mirator*, 11 (2010), 56-91.
- 6 ' "Þur sarriþu þursa trutin": Monster-Fighting and Medicine in Early Medieval Scandinavia', *Asclepio: revista de historia de la medicina y de la ciencia*, 61.1 (2009), 195-218.
- 7 'Folk-healing, Fairies and Witchcraft: The Trial of Stein Maltman, Stirling 1628', *Studia Celtica Fennica*, 3 (2006), 10-25.
- 8 'Getting Shot of Elves: Healing, Witchcraft and Fairies in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials', *Folklore*, 116 (2005), 19-36.
- 9 'Changing Style and Changing Meaning: Icelandic Historiography and the Medieval Redactions of *Heiðreks saga*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 77 (2005), 1-30.
- 10 'Gwŷr y Gogledd? Some Icelandic Analogues to *Branwen Ferch Lŷr*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 42 (Winter 2001), 27-50.
- e

articles in books

- 11 'Interlinguistic Communication in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*', in *Interfaces between Language and Culture in Medieval England: A Festschrift for Matti Kilpiö*, ed. by Alaric Hall, Olga Timofeeva, Ágnes Kiricsi and Bethany Fox, The Northern World, 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 37-80.
- 12 'The Orality of a Silent Age: The Place of Orality in Medieval Studies', in *Methods and the Medievalist: Current Approaches in Medieval Studies*, ed. by Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiäho, Elina Räsänen and Olga Timofeeva with Leila Virtanen (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 270-90.
- 13 'Constructing Anglo-Saxon Sanctity: Tradition, Innovation and Saint Guthlac', in *Images of Sanctity: Essays in Honour of Gary Dickson*, ed. by Debra Higgs Strickland, Visualising the Middle Ages, 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 207-35.

Other matters you wish to bring to the notice of the Committee

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Duration and Timing

Duration of whole project

The completion of project outcomes (principally seeing an article through publication, but also revising and extending my free-access modern Icelandic mp3 course at http://www.alarichall.org.uk/teaching/modern_icelandic.php) will take a further six months, giving the project a total duration of 12 months.

Duration of Fellowship (3-12 months)	6
Proposed start date	01/02/2014
Percentage of time to be spent on the project during the Fellowship	80

Details of other research projects and commitments during the Fellowship

I will retain some light administrative and marking commitments to Leeds (5%) and will also continue work on an ongoing monograph about medieval Icelandic romance (15%). This work will be focused on manuscript research in Icelandic collections.

Referees

Referee 1	Professor Terry Gunnell
Department : Institution	Félags- og mannvísindadeild (Social Anthropology and Folkloristics) : University of Iceland
Position:	Professor in Folkloristics
Email:	terry@hi.is

Referee 2	Dr Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir
Department : Institution	Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum (The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies) : University of Iceland
Position:	Senior Research Lecturer
Email:	salta@hi.is

Referee 3	Dr Matthew Driscoll
Department : Institution	Nordisk Forskningsinstitut (Department of Scandinavian Research) : University of Copenhagen
Position:	Associate Professor
Email:	mjd@hum.ku.dk

Previous and Current Applications

Previous Leverhulme awards or pending applications to the Trust

None.

Other awards received in the last 3 years related to this research

£2,445 for '*Sigrarðs saga frækna: the manuscript tradition*' (British Academy, 2009). This funded my first research trip to Iceland, underpinning the language-skills and contacts utilised in the present application.

Applications you have made or intend to make to other bodies related to this research proposal

None.

Finance

Replacement costs

Staff Type	Replacement costs (salary)
Number of months(3-12):	6
% if part-time	
Justification if applying for a temporary replacement	Temporary replacement would free me from teaching and administrative commitments at Leeds, enabling me to undertake the proposed programme of research. My proposed programme of skills development is not of a kind which would meet the requirements of internally funded research leave.

	Total
Scale Point	33
Basic Salary	£16,450
London Weighting	£0
National Insurance	£1,289
Superannuation	£2,632
Overall Total	£20,371

Research Expenses

	Total
Overseas travel UK to Iceland	£80
Overseas travel Iceland to UK	£80
Total	£160

Budget Summary

Research Expenses	
Overseas travel	£80
Overseas travel	£80
Research Expenses Total	£160
Replacement Costs	
Replacement costs (salary)	£20371
Replacement Costs	£20371
Grand Total	£20531

Study Leave Details

Your institution's policy for paid or unpaid study leave

All academic staff on teaching-and-research contracts enjoy one semester's paid research leave for every five semesters in harness.

Amount of paid study leave in the last 4 years

One semester.

Amount of unpaid study leave in the last 4 years

None.

Study leave eligibility in the next 3 years

I am eligible for a one-semester period of paid study leave, to fall in autumn 2013, and have successfully applied for this.

Institutional Approver

I confirm on behalf of the applicant's head of department/school and this institution:

- That this institution will grant the application the period and proportion of time requested for the Fellowship requested in the Duration and Timing section;
- That if replacement costs are requested the applicant will be in receipt of his/her normal salary during tenure of the award, and that the institution will accept the sum requested to provide such cover as requested in the Budget section;
- That if research expenses are requested, this request has the support of the head of department/school and institution.

Name	Elaine Wilson
Position	Faculty Research Manager
Email	e.k.wilson@leeds.ac.uk

Overseas Institutional Approvers

Overseas Institutional Approver 1

Institution	University of Iceland
Name	Terry Gunnell
Position	Professor in Folkloristics
Email	terry@hi.is