

Institution: University of Kent		
Unit of Assessment: 27: English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: The <i>Lady's Magazine</i> : Transforming Pedagogy, Enhancing Professional and Public Understanding of Women's History, Work and Craft Practice, and Promoting Wellbeing		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2005-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Jennie Batchelor	Professor of Eighteenth-Century Studies	2004-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Professor Batchelor's work on the <i>Lady's Magazine</i> (1770-1832) has been disseminated to international audiences via heritage partnerships, mainstream and social media, and through her creation of open-access, multimedia resources and public programming. Her publications, collaborative exhibitions and resources have: transformed public and professional understanding of eighteenth-century women's lives and craft practice; and changed pedagogy (curriculum development and assessment) in the UK, Europe, and North America. Her recovery of previously lost historic needlework patterns from the magazine has: enhanced professional and amateur embroiderers' understanding of the history of their craft; enabled makers to create, exhibit, and, in some cases, sell new craft works; created new craft communities; and aided wellbeing.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Batchelor's research sits at the crossroad of literary, material, and cultural histories. Since 2005, she has established an international reputation for her substantial scholarship, which uncovers the voices, lives, stories, and work of historical women for the academic community and public. Her work challenges the prejudices that obscure women's contributions to our collective histories by: developing cross-disciplinary methodologies; and expanding the literary-historical archive to include devalued genres (such as popular fiction and fashion journalism) and artefacts (particularly clothing and needlework). These challenges have been mounted in two monographs [R1, R2], four co-edited collections (2005-18), and numerous chapters and articles. Her 2010 <i>Women's Work</i> [R2] was particularly praised for challenging assumptions about 'what counts as literary labour' (<i>MLQ</i> review, 2012) and for forcing us 'to reconsider the model of intellectual labour we have inherited from the Romantic period' (<i>Women's Writing</i> review, 2012).</p> <p>Batchelor's commitment to redressing the devaluation of women's labour (from writing to needlework) spurred her research into the first modern women's magazine. Before Batchelor's work, there was no major study of the <i>Lady's Magazine</i> and it is commonly misunderstood in the scant scholarship in which it features as an epilogue to the essay-periodical (Shevelow 1989) or precursor to the Victorian magazine (Beetham 1996). These misunderstandings are linked to the journal's inaccessibility (no library has a complete run), its vast page count (45,000+ pp.), and prejudices against women's unpaid, popular, and anonymous writing (e.g. Mayo 1962 and Hughes 2015). In 2011, while preparing an article situating the magazine in literary history [R3], Batchelor pitched to Adam Matthew Digital a full-text digitisation. She was Consultant Editor for the project, which was published in 2013 as <i>18th-Century Journals V</i> [R4].</p>		

Once *18th-Century Journals V* launched, Batchelor devised her Leverhulme ‘*Lady’s Magazine Project*’ (2014-16) to transform academic and public understanding of the periodical via construction of an open-access metadata-rich Index of its authors and the 14,000+ items it published to 1818 [R5]. As PI, Batchelor devised the Index’s structure, metadata ontology, and attribution methods. The Index has been widely peer-reviewed (for instance, in *Romantic Circles* and *The Indexer* [both 2017]) and led to a commission by the BBC’s *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine (Dec 2020), showcasing her approaches for family genealogists tracking eighteenth-century ancestors. Other project outputs included the 250,000-word co-edited book *Women’s Periodicals and Print Media* (2018) and a popular blog. From 2015-17, Batchelor also developed a range of related media content (online, TV, podcasts) as further pathways to impact (see below).

In 2015, while conducting ‘Project’ research, Batchelor discovered a cache of presumed ‘lost’ embroidery patterns (for embellishing clothing, accessories, and household objects) from the c. 650 the *Lady’s Magazine* published monthly to 1819. Designed for use, the patterns were not meant to be bound into the annual volumes compiled at the year’s end, and their survival is an accident of history. Batchelor’s subsequent research on the patterns (2015–) has been archival (i.e. identifying women who used them and surviving stitched examples) and practice-based. She has recreated dozens of the designs and enabled hundreds of makers from three continents to do the same via three initiatives: i) online publication of the patterns (2015); ii) a non-competitive ‘Stitch Off’ in which Batchelor invited makers to recreate the designs, share their progress on the project’s social media channels, and show their work at a major exhibition at Chawton House, UK (2015-16); and iii) a popular history/craft book, *Jane Austen Embroidery* [R6], which uses Batchelor’s historical/literary research to contextualise 15 modern projects based on the patterns co-designed with embroiderer Alison Larkin (March 2020). Between March and May 2020, this was the top-selling embroidery book on Amazon (UK and US) and received positive reviews in international literary, craft, and women’s magazines/websites (such as *Woman’s Weekly*, *Simply Sewing*, *Jane Austen Society Newsletter*, *Classic Inspirations*).

Since March 2020, the book [R6] has had a range of impacts (see below) on maker practices, individual makers, and (in the Covid age) wellbeing. Batchelor has been interviewed about her research and Covid-crafting at: literary festivals and public education programmes in the US (including ‘Crafting with Jane Austen’, North Carolina) and the UK (Chawton House and Bradford on Avon Literary Fiesta); for craft magazines (e.g. *CrossSticher*); and on BBC Radio 4’s *You and Yours* (April 2020).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Batchelor, Jennie (2005). *Dress, Distress and Desire: Clothing and the Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230508200>

[R2] Batchelor, Jennie (2010; 2014 pbk). *Women’s Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781847792679>

[R3] Batchelor, Jennie (2011). “Connections, which are of service ... in a more advanced age”: The *Lady’s Magazine*, Community, and Women’s Literary Histories’. *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 30.2: 245–67. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/40646/>

[R4] Batchelor, Jennie (Consultant Editor) (2013). *18th-Century Journals V*. <http://www.18thcjournals.amdigital.co.uk/#> <http://doi.org/10.22024/UniKent/01.01.151>

[R5] Batchelor, Jennie, Claes, Koenraad, and DiPlacidi, Jenny. (2016). ‘The *Lady’s Magazine* Index’. <https://research.kent.ac.uk/the-ladys-magazine/index>

[R6] Batchelor, Jennie, and Larkin, Alison (2020). *Jane Austen Embroidery*. London: Pavilion; New York: Dover. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/81503/>

Grants

[G1] Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant, funding research for and preparation of the *Lady's Magazine Index*. PI: Jennie Batchelor. Value: £185,147.

4. Details of the impact

Batchelor's research and multimedia resources have: enhanced public/professional understanding of women's lives and work; impacted curriculum design and assessment in UK, US, and European universities; transformed embroidery practice; generated new craftworks; and enhanced makers' wellbeing.

From **2014**, Batchelor developed a public-facing profile and virtual community around her research using Twitter (c. 3,900 followers), Facebook (c. 1,100 followers), and a website/blog (c. 65,000 page views). Followers/community members include makers, historical novelists, collectors, heritage sector professionals, and family genealogists. These pathways to impact led to numerous media requests for expert commentary, including: international journalism (e.g. features for the Russian *Ogoniok* in **2018** and the UK *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine in **2020**); various podcasts (including 'Stitchery Stories' in **2017** and **2020**; 'Bonnet at Dawn' in **2019**); literary festivals (most notably a **2017** Cheltenham Literary Festival panel on Jane Austen); and TV (including Lucy Worsley's **2017** BBC documentary, *Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors*). They also generated new media content/programming about eighteenth-century women's work, writing, and history. Journalist and author Helen Lewis acknowledges Batchelor's research on the *Lady's Magazine* as 'crucial' to the development of the *New Statesman's* landmark **2016** 'Hidden Histories' podcast series, which promoted public understanding of women writers before Austen. Batchelor guest co-presented three of the six episodes and Episode 3 ('What did it mean to have a magazine by women?') 'focused primarily' on 'Batchelor's research on this important but not popularly well-known publication' **[a]**.

These media drew on and expanded the reach of Batchelor's research (*Behind Closed Doors* had 2 million viewers on first airing, plus many international repeats) and enhanced public and professional understanding of women's lives and work. Lewis writes that Batchelor's *New Statesman* podcasts 'shone a light on aspects of women's lives, women's history and women's writing that were previously hidden – and had a great impact beyond the academy' among 'listeners around the world' who still email Lewis about it **[a]**. Historian, curator, and broadcaster Lucy Worsley notes that Batchelor's 'detailed expertise' and 'research into *The Lady's Magazine* was a wonderful resource to turn to in the preparation of [her] documentary' **[b]**. Worsley documents that Batchelor's 'detailed expertise on Regency fashion, needlework patterns and the *Lady's Magazine*' 'provided valuable new insights into the habits of one of the country's most well-known authors, Jane Austen', and 'enhanced' Worsley's and viewers' 'awareness of the cultural importance of fashion and needlework' **[b]**.

Via *18th-Century Journals V* (**[R4]**, **2013**), her Leverhulme-funded 'Index' (**[R5]**, **2014-16**), and multimedia resources, Batchelor has made the *Lady's Magazine's* vast archive navigable to academics and non-academic audiences, including students. From **2016**, these resources have had demonstrable impact on undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum design, delivery, and assessment in UK, European, and US universities, including: Cardiff; Southampton; York; Ghent; Uppsala; CSU Long Beach; Cornell College; Oakland; Purdue; and SUNY Brockport. Professor Powell (Purdue), who has used the Index in UG and PG teaching since **2016**, describes Batchelor's research as 'a major service to the field' that has changed students' understanding and knowledge of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by making 'it possible to bring new material into the classroom and to disrupt the standard stories about what and how readers read' **[c]**. Batchelor's resources have also inspired new assessments and generated new learning methods for undergraduates. For instance, Dr Sagal (Cornell College) documents that Batchelor's research 'enabled and encouraged' her 'to do things differently in the classroom' **[d]**. From **2018**, Sagal introduced a 'material project' on an eighteenth-century British literature course in which students submit embroidered responses in lieu of written work. The assessment 'unusually' allowed undergraduate students to 'engage in practice-based research', 'connected students with

real women in the 18c and added a completely different complexion to the class's discussion of women's experience and material concerns' [d].

In **2015-16**, Batchelor launched the #StitchOff after uncovering and digitally publishing 'lost' patterns from the *Lady's Magazine*. Participants, aged 9-80, hailed from three continents and included novice/occasional stitchers, Embroiderer's Guild members, Royal School of Needlework (RSN) graduates, and professional embroiderers and textile artists. The #StitchOff generated dozens of new craftworks and exhibition content [g]. These include: a) Alison Larkin's in situ recreation of one of Batchelor's patterns at Captain Cook Memorial Museum's 'Wives and Sweethearts' exhibition (UK, **2016**); b) a replica 1780s work bag that Dylan Laskin Grossman commissioned to fill a collection gap for the 'Pennies and Purses Exhibition' (**2018**) at Gibson House Museum (Toronto) – the design for which Batchelor sourced and consulted on; and c) an exhibition room devoted to Regency needlework that Batchelor was invited to curate for Chawton House's 'Emma at 200' exhibition (Chawton House, **2016**) and which featured 40+ international creations from #StitchOff participants. This final exhibition attracted 7,000+ visitors (the largest the House has had) and international press and media coverage (e.g. the journal of the Jane Austen Society of America, *Persuasions*, *The Quilter Magazine*, 'Stitchery Stories' podcast: combined audience: 13,000+). *BSECS Criticks* praised the exhibition's 'stunning contributions' and its sparking of 'new curiosity about the art form' [e].

#StitchOff participant feedback reveals that the experience transformed makers' practice and generated individual, cultural, and economic impacts [f]. Pleydell was one of many participants inspired by the #StitchOff to 'have a go' at embroidery for 'the first time', while new embroiderer Snape states that 'it did push me to try a couple of stitches and to improve the standard of my needlework generally' [f]. Amateur/professional embroiderers and textile artists alike credit the #StitchOff with teaching them the history of their craft, boosting their 'respect' (Davy) for the talent and ingenuity of eighteenth-century women who made these designs by candlelight at 'speed' and 'by eye', using imperfectly designed patterns and less sophisticated technology (Wright) [f]. RSN graduate Bailey commented that 'the patterns and wealth of contextual surrounding material' that Batchelor provided created an 'immersive, wide-ranging experience' otherwise unavailable to the 'modern embroiderer' [f]. Participants widely praised the #StitchOff's 'inclusive attitude' (Roberts, see also Jones) for breaking down professional, amateur, guild hierarchies to create a 'community' (e.g. Martin, Pleydell, Snape, Tapper) of 'ordinary stitchers' (Jones) and experts, and, in textile artist Hack's case, establishing 'a network that I couldn't have reached any other way' that provides 'inspiration and technical help' [f]. Others attribute career developments to the experience. Bailey credits the experience of designing embroidery workshops around the patterns with Batchelor at Chawton in **2016** and **2017** as instilling the 'confidence' to deliver others; for instance, at the Bath Jane Austen Festival [f]. Young's #StitchOff exhibit led directly to an opportunity to stage a 'two woman showcase' of her work [f]. Martin sold items (T-shirts, greetings cards, mugs) based on her #StitchOff creations on Redbubble and Etsy. Whitechurch writes that the #Stitch Off was 'the start of the process' that heightened her interest in the 'history of textiles' and led to her 'to return to studying for a degree in Textile Design' [f].

Batchelor and Larkin's *Jane Austen Embroidery* (**2020**) made the *Lady's Magazine* patterns accessible to international audiences. Its publication at the start of the global pandemic generated context-specific therapeutic/mental health benefits, early recognition of which impacts led to Batchelor's invitation to be interviewed about the book and Covid crafting on BBC Radio 4 *You and Yours* (**2020**). Dublin-based Comyn documents that she has incorporated *Jane Austen Embroidery* into her 'daily routine to manage the stress and feelings of isolation and disconnection associated with the continuing global pandemic', and that working on the book's projects has 'reduced my stress-levels, given much-needed breaks from screen-time and connected me with family and friends overseas' through gifts made using the book [h]. Glasgow-based McAulay, who had 'minimal' experience of embroidery before Batchelor's projects, has found comfort in the 'inclusiveness' and 'online sense of community' around the book and its social media, and reports that 'Batchelor's research has had a significant impact on me over the past couple of years', especially in fostering 'mental wellbeing', during which time McAulay has produced a stitched lockdown journal using some of Batchelor's designs [i]. These impacts are further corroborated by

the **September 2020** #CovidCrafting event [g] that Batchelor and Larkin streamed on Facebook and YouTube (3,500+ viewers on Facebook and YouTube combined from the US, Mexico, New Zealand, UK, and Europe), and which features maker videos and testimonials and generated conversation around the work inspired by *Jane Austen Embroidery* (from embroidered Covid masks to garters and tote bags) [g and h].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Testimonial: Journalist, former Deputy Editor of the *New Statesman* and Editorial Commissioner of *Hidden Histories* podcast series 'The Great Forgetting: Women Writers before Austen' (17 October 2020).

[b] Testimonial: Broadcaster, author and Chief Curator, Historic Royal Palaces (21 October 2020).

[c] Testimonial: Professor of English and Secretary of Faculties, Purdue University, on the impact of Batchelor's '*Lady's Magazine* Index' on curriculum design and delivery.

[d] Testimonial letter from an Assistant Professor, Cornell College, on the impact of Batchelor's research and resources on curriculum design and the introduction of both practice-based research in undergraduate modules and innovative/creative assessments.

[e] Review of the #StitchOff exhibition, curated by Batchelor, and associated embroidery workshops on the public-facing website *BSECS Criticks* (24 July 2016).

<https://www.bsecs.org.uk/criticks-reviews/ladys-magazine-embroidery-class/>

[f] Report collating responses of questionnaires completed by Stitch Off participants and blog posts written by Stitch Off participants documenting the personal, social, and economic impacts of their experiences (1 December 2016).

[g] 'Crafting through Covid', an online event and virtual conversation on Batchelor's discovery of the *Lady's Magazine* patterns from the Stitch Off to the publication of *Jane Austen Embroidery*, including two films documenting some of the hundreds of new artworks made using the patterns and makers' testimonies (16 September 2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1WYVY5Gaq4>

[h] Testimony from Dublin-based academic and amateur embroiderer on the mental health benefits of engaging with the crafting community created by Batchelor's research and of using the patterns/projects in *Jane Austen Embroidery* to cope with the Covid-19 lockdown.

[i] Testimony from a Glasgow-based librarian and novice embroiderer on the impact of Batchelor's *Lady's Magazine* research and using the patterns/projects as inspiration for a daily stitched lockdown journal to chronicle her experiences in the Covid-19 lockdown.