

<b>Institution: University of Bath</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D27</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> Enhancing public engagement with history: France during the Second World War
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Diamond's research has enhanced public understanding of the lives of French civilians during World War 2. Her work with cultural professionals, including radio and television producers, museum curators, non-academic editors and publishers, has enhanced economic prosperity in the creative sector. She has been able to integrate new ways of thinking about the period into public discourse and to extend her reach to global audiences. She has used the internet to communicate her research and her interactive website has enabled numerous individuals to gain public recognition for their stories. This co-production of historical knowledge provides an innovative way for cultural heritage to be preserved and conserved digitally.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research has centred on the experiences of ordinary people in France during and after the Second World War. It falls into two themes; both associated with a significant monograph. The first deals with issues of Gender, and the second with the French experience of defeat in 1940.</p> <p>Diamond's research on <b><i>Gender and the Second World War in France</i></b> (A) uncovered the different ways in which French men and women experienced the war. The book was the first to chart the pressures faced by women and their experience of the transition into the post-war period. It demonstrates that women's age and family situations had an important bearing on their daily life choices and their chances of survival. Her work illuminated our understanding of how women could be drawn into resistance or collaboration through their everyday lives. It argues that the Occupation explicitly brought politics into the private sphere in a way which provided an opportunity for women to act 'politically'; for example by inviting a German officer into their home or hiding a Jewish family in their attic. However despite gaining the right to vote in 1944, most women struggled to carry through this political commitment into their post-war lives and the immediate post-war period saw most women withdraw from the public sphere and focus on rebuilding their home lives with the return of the men.</p> <p>Her second area of research on <b><i>France's experience of defeat</i></b> (B) was the first exploration in English of how it felt for French people to become refugees in their own country. It explores the reasons why people left their homes to risk all on the roads of France. It argues that lack of preparation for possible invasion and the ensuing exodus of civilians laid the path for Pétain's Vichy government to take power in a climate of trauma and amidst the complete collapse of the structures of the Third Republic. It explores the reasons why this important event in the history of France has been completely overlooked in the historical record and Diamond's research has had an important impact in drawing attention to these events.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p><b>A. <i>Gender and the Second World War</i></b>        £3,700 British Academy award in 1997.        1995 article : 'Libération, quelle libération? L'expérience des femmes toulousaines', F Thébaud (ed) <i>Clio, histoire, femmes, et sociétés: Résistances et Libérations, France 1940-45</i>, Presses Universitaires de Mirail, 89-109, <a href="http://clio.revues.org/517">http://clio.revues.org/517</a>        1995 article: 'Gaining the vote, a liberating experience?' <i>Modern and Contemporary France</i>, 129-139. 10.1080/09639489508456229        1999 monograph: <i>Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints</i>, Longman. 978-0582299108 (can be supplied by HEI on request)        2000 article: 'A New Dawn?: French Women and the Liberation of France', <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i>, Vol.23, No 6, 729-738.  <a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027753950000145X">http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027753950000145X</a></p>

2005 co-edited book, *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation, New Perspectives on Wartime France*, Berg. 978-1859737729 (can be supplied by HEI on request)

### **B. France's experience of defeat.**

2007 monograph: *Fleeing Hitler, France 1940*, Oxford University Press, 978-0199532599 (can be supplied by HEI on request)

## **4. Details of the impact**

Diamond has collaborated with a range of beneficiaries who have drawn on her research as a way of engaging the public's interest in the period allowing Diamond to impact on English speaking audiences globally, across Europe, the US and Australasia through a variety of mediums. In June 2013, *Fleeing Hitler* had sold close to 10,000 copies, mostly overseas, largely in the US (6080). These figures demonstrate the significance of her book which was well received and widely reviewed in the broadsheet press including *The New York Review of Books*, *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, *The FT Magazine (Culture)*, *The Sunday Times (Culture)*, *Tribune*, *The Historian*. In the *London Review of Books* in May 2008, Jeremy Harding described the book as 'a convincing piece of history drawing on contemporary accounts'. It was translated into Japanese in 2009 with a print run of 2,000 copies. Diamond's books have been widely adopted on University courses relating to French/ European history and Gender history across the UK and the US (including at Yale, Amherst and McMater, Canada).

### **Contribution to the creative sector**

#### **1. In the media**

As detailed below, the wide dissemination of Diamond's publications have led her to be regularly approached by radio and TV producers who engage her to shape the delivery of her research for their programmes. She has been able to change their assumptions and shape their outputs thereby refining existing narratives about the period. In particular, she has showcased women's voices and experience. Her work has informed the ways that the public understand and remember the everyday of the Second World War.

#### **Radio producers**

Diamond made an expert contribution to a BBC World Service's 'The Why Factor' in October 2012 on 'The Shaved Head'. She was interviewed about her research on the women whose heads were shaved in 'punishment' for sleeping with the enemy after the Liberation of France. *'Dr Diamond played an important role ... She provided invaluable background and helped contextualise the story and issues raised in a powerful and moving way. ... Dr Diamond sent us some very useful research material, including her own very accessible book on this period, which helped to pull together a major section of the programme. We were extremely grateful for Dr Diamond's input and look forward to working together again in the future. ... the World Service has a weekly audience of 180 million globally.'* (1) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00zf17r>

#### **TV producers**

Diamond has twice acted as consultant for Wall to Wall productions who make the series 'Who Do You Think You Are?' for the BBC. In April 2011 she prepared material for an episode with JK Rowling and provided context for her relative's wartime letters. *'Her expertise on the daily life of French civilians during the Second World War helped Jo Rowling to understand what her great grandfather experienced while he was trapped in the suburbs of Paris'* (consolidated viewing figures 7 million – filmed interview not included). (2) She researched a further episode on Patrick Stewart whose father experienced post traumatic stress as a result of his experiences in France in May 1940. Diamond's research and the additional documentation she uncovered enabled them to better communicate the suffering of civilians caught up in events. (3.5 million viewers, Diamond credited in the end titles).

In October 2012 she contributed to a New Zealand based production company's film on NZ born SOE agent Nancy Wake. *'Her on camera interview ... informed us as producers, as it will our audiences, to help comprehend the risks that Nancy as a woman agent ran in Occupied France. [It*

*has played an important role in helping our audiences to understand the context of the world in which the resistance operated and thereby gave us further insights into the aspect of Nancy Wake's own experience that should be communicated to audiences. Diamond's research ... will really help to inform the public understanding of hidden aspects to these significant events' (3). The film has been delivered to New Zealand's TV One. Distributors expect to sell the programme into Europe, the UK and Australia.*

Diamond also advised Maryland based Gardner Productions about the civilian experience in Paris 1939-43 for their film on woman SOE agent Noor-un-nisa Inayat Khan. *'Diamond's contribution has played an important role in informing this documentary project both for us as producers in helping us to shape the material that will be communicated to audiences and more directly as a result of her on-screen interview' (4). The programme will be screened on PBS in the US in the autumn and is expected to be sold to Channel 4 and other European channels. Working with media professionals has enabled Diamond to reach global audiences and to bring changes in understandings of this period across the English speaking world.*

## **2. In the curatorial sector**

*Fleeing Hitler* was used as the basis for 4 of 22 panels (18%) of an exhibition in Germany on the German invasion of France entitled "Das überschreitet die Grenzen der Vernunft - Mythos Blitzkrieg" which ran at the German Tank Museum, Munster, Lower Saxony, from August 10 - November 30 2010. During this period, roughly 40.000 people physically walked through the hall in which the exhibition was shown. The exhibition was then lent to the "Wehrgeschichtliches Museum Rastatt" in the south of Germany from April 24 - August 15 2011 where a further 5.000 - 10.000 visitors saw the exhibition. The curator of the exhibition wrote: "... it's safe to say that the exhibition was at least in some cases able to change viewpoints fundamentally, based on a deeper understanding of the human side of this historical event. "The French" of 1940 in the mind of these visitors were no longer only the soldiers - now these visitors thought also of the civilians and what they had to endure "(5).

## **3. Non-academic editors and publishers**

Diamond has written reviews and a column for the *THES* (2-8 September 2010) in their section entitled 'The Canon' on Lucie Aubrac's, *'Ils partiront dans l'ivresse'* (1984). Following an invitation she wrote a preface to Fernande Davis, 2008, *'Girl in the Belgian Resistance: A Wakeful Eye in the Underground'*, Beach Lloyd Publishers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. In one telling example, Charlotte Heatherley recounted her elderly friend's reactions to reading Diamond's book: *'As I read excerpts aloud to Josette, I witnessed a transformation ... Finally, here was validation and corroboration of all she had told her family through the years. Hearing these stories gave her a kind of peace. Sharing her memories, getting them permanently recorded, became Josette's focus during the last month of her life. She said that it had made the dying process easier'*. They were published as a book entitled *'Saga of a French Dish'* (2010) (6).

## **Contributing to wider public understanding of the Second World War in France**

The public have been exposed to Diamond's work through her interactions with the creative sector as described above and she has also been involved in further public engagement activities which have given her the opportunity to engage directly with interested parties.

## **1. Via community engagement**

Diamond's was invited to participate in the events around the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of De Gaulle's Appel in 1940, and on 17 June 2010 she spoke at a day conference on 'Charles de Gaulle, London and the Resistance' held at the *Institut Français* on women in the French resistance. She broadcast two live radio interviews on the morning news (BBC Bristol and BBC Wales) about her VIP invitation to attend the commemorative ceremony held at the Chelsea Barracks involving both the French President Sarkozy and the British Prime Minister Cameron.

## **2. Via the web**

Diamond's interview on the death of Resistance hero Raymond Aubrac in April 2012 published by the CNN website provoked considerable discussion about the nature and extent of the French

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Resistance and the contribution it made to the Second World War.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/11/world/raymond-aubrac-obit> It received 250 posted comments and 613 recommendations on facebook. Diamond is a strong believer in the power of the internet as a tool for public engagement. Her work continues to be the subject of web discussions on sites like goodreads.com, Coolread4.html, wordpress.com and <http://thathideousman> testifying to its reach. On 3/12/2010 one blogger wrote of 'Fleeing Hitler': *'we can read this kind of book as a background when we try to understand what is happening in our times. ... The kinds of thoughts that were in the minds of Parisians in 1940 should to some extent correspond to the thoughts in the heads of people fleeing from Srebrenica'*.

<https://whenthecomesfallingfromthesky.wordpress.com/2010/12/03/book-fleeing-hitler-france-1940-why-people-run-away-in-war/>

The continuous flow of correspondence from readers of her work in the UK and the US offering her accounts of their and their family's war-time experiences inspired Diamond to secure funding to put together an interactive website to enable people to post their family stories and share their experiences with one another and other interested users. (See [www.fleeinghitler.org](http://www.fleeinghitler.org)). This provides valuable evidence of the level of public engagement and the transformative influence her work has had on readers. The website is currently populated with 44 stories and blogs from a total of 26 contributors. Comments made both by contributors and users visiting the website indicate that Diamond's work provides families with a form of authentication of their stories and has thereby had a significant impact in helping them to come to terms with that past. One user commented 'A wonderful opportunity for people to have a voice with their stories, which otherwise might have disappeared unheard'. Contributors have embraced the opportunity to share their family stories with other interested parties.

Ivor Samuels wrote *'When we told my aunt about Hanna Diamond's website project, it inspired her to recount her story after previously refusing to put anything down or give an account which was more than disconnected anecdotes. We all felt that the website offered her an appropriate way to present her memories and could offer those interested in the period and the events a valuable resource'* (7). A psychotherapist commented on the website that this sharing was important *'to help them to face up to and work through the intergenerational impact of family members either surviving or indeed perishing in the Holocaust'*. The website launch was attended by 150 people and generated local media attention. Since its launch in January 2013, the website has attracted 32 comments and over 1400 visitors throughout the world. It is notable that users spend close to four minutes on the site, viewing an average of at least four pages per visit which is a remarkably high figure. The site is valuable depository for testimony to be preserved digitally; an example of how digital technology can be used to create a living historical resource which is a widely available, growing digital archive.

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Senior Producer, BBC Radio Current Affairs.
2. J.K.Rowling episode, Asst Producer.
3. Senior Producer, The Gibson Group.
4. Documentary film producer.
5. Research director/ Curator, German Tank Museum.
6. <http://www.fleeinghitler.org/blog/2012/10/guest-post-by-charlotte-heatherley-recording-josettes-story/>
7. <http://www.fleeinghitler.org/blog/2013/05/ivor-samuels-family-and-experiences-on-the-fleeing-hitler-website/>