

Institution: University of Strathclyde
Unit of Assessment: 29
Title of case study: Cultural, Creative and Economic Benefits of the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>As a consequence of individual and collaborative research on the 1962 International Writers' Conference, Drs Eleanor Bell and Angela Bartie (UoA 30) contacted the Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 2010 with the idea of marking the 50th anniversary of this famous literary event. Acting as academic advisors to the project over three years, the work of Bell and Bartie has been publically acknowledged as providing the spark of inspiration for the establishment of Edinburgh World Writers' Conference 2012-2013, a hugely successful series of worldwide events visiting 15 countries, the global discussion representing 'the greatest gathering of writers' voices ever staged' [Source 1]. Impact can be traced through three main channels: the cultural benefits to audiences in each host city (and worldwide via social media), the creative benefits to the writers directly involved (262 to date in July 2013), and the economic benefits to UK society and other host countries around the world.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Context: Dr Bell began to investigate the historical context of the 1962 International Writers' Conference in early 2007 as part of her research into the under-explored area of Scottish literature and culture during the 1960s. The original, five-day 1962 International Writers' Conference was unprecedented and transformative for literary culture. By bringing together over 70 international writers (including Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, Muriel Spark and William Burroughs), in a way that had never happened before, it generated highly controversial debates, tested the literary and cultural boundaries of the time and attracted world-wide media attention on Edinburgh. While the conference is infamous in literary history worldwide, it has largely been remembered anecdotally due to a lack of available documentation. Bell, therefore, began to unearth historical materials relating to the conference [1], whilst also examining the key significance of the event within Scottish literary culture in various publications [2, 3, 4, and 5].</p> <p>Key Findings: While the 1962 conference is regarded as seminal in literary history, until Dr Bell's research there was little material evidence available to substantiate this. Bell's research explores the ways in which the 1962 conference both illuminated the conservatism within many aspects of Scottish society, yet also demonstrated the impetus for radical change emerging at the time; in this respect the conference captured a unique moment of Scotland on the brink of opening up to the 'swinging sixties'. Through uncovering this rich variety of archival materials, and her wider application of these in various publications listed below, Bell's research asserts that the 1962 Conference represents a crucial turning point in Scottish literary culture - a transitional moment between tradition and modernity in terms of the key debates it generated surrounding nationalism and internationalism. Her publications on this event have explored the ways in which the international and experimental approach of the conference indeed opened out the possibilities for Scottish literary expression both at the time and subsequently, acting as a catalyst for cultural change. In this way it is a key event in understanding the literary and cultural context of Scottish literature in the early 1960s and beyond.</p> <p>After discovering mutual research interests, Dr Bell began collaborating with Dr Bartie in 2009. As well as collating materials on the 1962 conference, Bell and Bartie travelled to Paris to interview original conference organisers John Calder and Jim Haynes (February 2012). They also interviewed Scottish artist Sandy Moffat (March 2012), who reflected upon his positive, formative experiences of attending the 1962 conference. In April 2012, Bell and Bartie then uncovered an important archive of photographs by Alan Daiches at the National Library of Scotland, which documented the 1962 conference in significant detail and further helped to re-envisage the legacy of the 1962 conference. This collaborative research resulted in <i>The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962</i> [1] a multi-format publication containing extracts from the</p>

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original conference programme, the previously unpublished and highly sought-after conference transcripts, interviews and reflections from attendees, news clippings from the 1960s and a range of images from the Alan Daiches photographic archive. The book was launched at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August 2012 at an opening panel discussion for the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference 2012-2013, 'Putting a Bomb under Scottish Literature', for which Drs Bell and Bartie shared a platform with original 1962 conference organisers John Calder and Jim Haynes in a 320-capacity venue.

Key researchers: Dr Eleanor Bell, Lecturer in English Studies, University of Strathclyde 2004-2012, Senior Lecturer 2012 onwards. Dr Angela Bartie, Research Fellow, University of Strathclyde 2009-2010, Lecturer in History 2010 onwards.

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

References 1 and 3 are included in REF2 submission UoA29

1. Bartie, Angela and Eleanor Bell (eds), 2012. *The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962*, Glasgow: Cargo Publishing.

Notes on quality: Literary critic Stuart Kelly on this book: 'Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell have edited and produced an excellent source book and analysis of the Conference, finally allowing critics to assess the impact and ponder the details with a precision hitherto impossible to achieve. It is a tremendous piece of scholarship, and should be on the shelves of anyone who cares about contemporary literature and the avant-garde, Scottish or otherwise.' [Source 2].

2. Bell, Eleanor and Linda Gunn, eds. 2013. *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Notes on quality: Volume 20 of the international Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature series. The first series of academic essays to be published on the Scottish sixties.

3. Bell, Eleanor, 2011. "'The ugly burds without wings?': Reactions to Tradition since the 1960s' in Fran Brearton, Edna Longley and Peter Mackay (eds), *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, pp.238-250.

4. Bell, Eleanor, 2012. 'Experimenting with the Verbivocovisual: Edwin Morgan's Early Concrete Poetry', *Scottish Literary Review*, 4 (2), pp.105-121.

Notes on quality The leading international, peer-reviewed journal for Scottish literary studies.

5. Bell, Eleanor, 2012. 'Writing Nation?: Experimentation and the 1960s' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing*, Glenda Norquay (ed.), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp.122-129.

Notes on quality Part of an important series which draws on and sustains the developing interest worldwide in the scope and nature of Scottish literature.

Other evidence for quality of research

Dr Bell was invited to give talks on the above research at Queen's University, Belfast (November 2007), Dundee University (March 2008), Stirling University (March 2008) and Edinburgh Napier University (October 2009).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Process from research to impact:

After collating an extensive amount of materials documenting the literary and historical significance of the 1962 International Writers' Conference, Drs Bell and Bartie had the idea of marking the 50th anniversary of the conference in 2012 as a means of revisiting its cultural, historical and intellectual significance. As the 1962 conference was foundational for what we now know as the Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF), Drs Bell and Bartie contacted the Director of EIBF in 2010 with the idea of two 50th anniversary events. EIBF embraced this idea with enthusiasm and invited Bell and Bartie to become academic advisors to the project.

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Over a substantial number of meetings with the Director of EIBF, and various members of his team during 2010-2012, the initial idea for two commemorative sessions grew significantly larger. In July 2011, EIBF made clear to Drs Bell and Bartie, in confidence, their ambitious plans to conceptually re-echo the original conference and hold the event over five days, making it the central strand of the book festival that year in Edinburgh, and internationally if further funding followed. With input from Bell and Bartie, EIBF then made an application to the Scottish Government's EXPO fund; this was successful and the funding was matched by the British Council (financial details below). Together, the EIBF and British Council embarked on staging a global conference, visiting fifteen countries over a one year period (August 2012-August 2013) with the aim of creating an historic picture of the role of literature today.

Generating and Informing a World Writers' Conference: Without the research of Bell and Bartie, the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference (EWWC) 2012-2013 would not have been conceived. At the opening address of EWWC 2012-2013 in Edinburgh (August 2012) Director of EIBF, Nick Barley, acknowledged to the 550 audience members the impact of the research of Bell and Bartie, stating that *'the British Council and the Book Festival are indebted to the work of two academics at Strathclyde University, Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell, who have advised us along the way and who even have gave us the spark of inspiration for organizing another conference fifty years after the first.'* [Source 3].

In June 2013, Nick Barley wrote to Bell and Bartie stating that *'I have never forgotten the fact that the original idea arose out of your [Drs Bartie and Bell's] infectious enthusiasm and your profound belief in the importance of 1962... There has been an unceasing buzz around the conference as it has toured around the world... There is a huge mine of ideas and evidence being gathered, which will surely offer rich pickings for historians of the future. The thoughtfulness and insight of two academics at the University of Strathclyde have been a key component in making this possible.'* [Source 4]. Bell and Bartie's research continued to inform EWWC 2012-2013 deeply throughout. Their specially prepared synoptic history of the 1962 conference was distributed to 50 Edinburgh participant writers and was also used in Cape Town delegate packs. This information was also printed in the Edinburgh conference brochure, which was circulated to 3000 Edinburgh International Book Festival audience members [Source 5].

Creative and Political Impacts on Writers and Wider Society: As of 4 July 2013, 262 international writers have participated in 13 editions of the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference in the following countries around the world: Scotland, Canada, Germany, South Africa, Russia, India, China, Congo, Belgium, France, Portugal, Turkey, Trinidad/Tobago, and Malaysia. Commenting on this, Nick Barley has stated that: *'Some of the most memorable moments so far have been in Congo-Brazzaville, in Beijing and in St Malo, where authors earnestly discussed the role of the novel in 21st-century society through the lens of their own political and geographical contexts. Henri Lopes discussing the need for a 'national' literature to help articulate a post-colonial Congo; Scottish writer Sophie Cooke having her Beijing event halted by Chinese authorities when she mentioned Liu Xiaobo; Bosnian novelist Velibor Colic talking emotionally in St Malo about his defection from the Bosnian army in 1992, and the appropriation of literature by extremist nationalists in his country... all of these have been key moments in an extraordinary series of conversations.'* [Source 6].

During the debates on censorship on 21st August 2012 in Edinburgh, the 50 EWWC writers were shocked to hear about censorship laws in the education system in Arizona, USA (House Bill 2281) – they then issued a public statement against this bill [Source 7]. Also, discussion amongst the 50 writers in a closed panel in Edinburgh led to the production of a collaborative statement on writers' rights and challenges in relation to copyright and ebook distribution [Source 8]

Cultural Impacts on Media and Society: In the period 1 July 2012 – 24 June 2013, there had been 33584 visits to the EWWC website from viewers in 166 different countries. The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference has a current audience of 2123 actively engaged followers across our main social media channels. At its highest points so far, the EWWC Twitter hashtag (#worldwritersconf) has had a reach of 439,698 accounts with 886,236 impressions, while the

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EWWC Facebook posts regularly reach on average c.8000 accounts [Source 6]. As of the 4th July, the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference had received 267 media mentions across print, online, radio and TV publications around the world [Source 6]. Also, 17 debates (5 from Edinburgh, 2 from Berlin, 3 from Russia, 2 from Trinidad, 2 from Lisbon and 3 from Kuala Lumpur) have been live-streamed on the Edinburgh World Writers Conference website. Although some countries have yet to provide data, the following figures further substantiate the project's reach:

- The live-stream of the five Edinburgh sessions was watched from almost 900 unique internet addresses in 68 countries.
- 161 viewers watched the live stream from Berlin. The on-demand films of the Berlin events achieved just under 450 views in a month.
- The Trinidad live-streams were watched by 159 viewers. [Source 6].

As a result of the conference sessions taking place in 15 countries around the world, the EIBF Director remarked that '*my impression has been that every single one of these events has underlined Scotland's status as a major player in global literary culture*'. [Source 4].

Economic Impact of EWWC 2012-2013:

Drs Bell and Bartie helped input to the EIBF's application to the Scottish Government Expo Fund in November 2011, one of four funding bodies that successfully secured £260,000 for the EIBF. The project enabled the development of a major partnership between the EIBF and the British Council – the latter providing £266,000 in match funding and £34,000 of in-kind support. [Source 6]

Within EIBF, five jobs have been created as a result of the project: a 20-month freelance contract for a Writers' Conference Coordinator, a 12-month freelance contract for a Writers' Conference Editor, two six-day contracts for Writers' Conference Assistants and a five-day contract for a Social Media Consultant. A commission was also put out for an artist to produce a piece of work in response to EWWC 2012-13. £186,500 has been contributed to the EWWC project by international literary partners and long-term service contracts to support the project (within the UK) include Glocast, Four Coleman Getty and Tangent. [Source 6]

Within the British Council, a 9 month contract for a 3 days a week freelance project manager was created, and a freelance web manager was contracted for 9 months for 2 days a week. [Source 9]

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

1. Edinburgh International Book Festival Brochure 2012, p.6.
<http://digitalpages.digitalissue.co.uk/?userpath=00000082/00008126/00077454/&page=6>
2. Stuart Kelly, 'The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference' in *Edinburgh Review* 136, p.17.
3. MP4 of the opening address of EWWC 2012-2013, stating that EIBF and British Council are indebted to Bell as Bartie for providing the initial spark of inspiration.
4. Statement of thanks from Director of Edinburgh International Book Festival to Bell and Bartie for their role in EWWC 2012-2013.
5. Copy of the synoptic history prepared by Bell and Bartie for conference delegate pack and EWWC 2012-2013 website.
6. Official statement from EIBF, containing facts and figures relating to EWWC 2012-2013.
7. Statement prepared by EWWC delegates on censorship in Arizona state schools:
<http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/censorship-today/writers-condemn-arizona-school-literature-law/>
8. Details of the collaborative statement produced by writers in Edinburgh on copyright and publishing issues: <http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/conference-blog/writers-issue-statement-of-principle-and-intent/>
9. Statement from Literature Specialist, British Council detailing the economic benefits of EWWC 2012-2013 to British Council.