

Institution:	University of Ulster
Unit of Assessment:	UOA 29: English Language and Literature
Title of case study:	Driving Participation in Ulster Poetry: the Ulster Poetry Project
1. Summary of the impact	<p>This project is dedicated to the study of Ulster poetry, and focuses on enhancing knowledge of vernacular literature. It researches and utilises literary archives across the region to look at identity and cultural diversity within Northern Ireland. The core impact lies in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing awareness of and participation in the literary, linguistic and cultural traditions of Northern Ireland; • interpreting this literature for audiences external to academia; • facilitating contact with this literature in order to allow people to appreciate connecting with voices from the past; • and, recalibrating literary knowledge with significant impact on education, policy makers, creative media and the general public.
2. Underpinning research	<p>Ferguson researches the vernacular literary traditions of Ireland and Scotland and their contribution to personal, local, regional and national identities. He joined Ulster in 2005 and published the ground breaking <i>Ulster-Scots Writing, An Anthology</i> in 2008. His work is driven by contemporary examinations of UK and Irish national and regional identities, as well as questions raised about the archival materials pertaining to this literature and their impact upon contemporary discourse on literature, culture, and identity. Within the university, Ferguson's work is instrumental in sustaining a long tradition of research excellence in the field of Irish and Scottish Studies, and has been recognised by his appointment as executive Director of the CISS. Since his appointment as a full-time lecturer the University has recognised the significance of his work, by appointing White, a second Ulster-Scots Literature lecturer in 2013.</p> <p>Ferguson has extensive publications on Ulster poetry, literary studies, and book history and has edited/ written a number of internationally recognised books and articles on Ulster writing, Ulster-Scots literature, Scottish culture, literary history, and poetry. This includes an important exploration of Robert Burns' influence outside Scotland, <i>Revising Robert Burns and Ulster</i> (Four Courts Press, 2009). Ferguson has also contributed two significant chapters for the <i>Oxford History of the Irish Book</i> (Volume IV) on Ulster-Scots literature and the industrialisation of the Irish book, both of which prominently place Ulster-Scots literature within the wider subject area of nineteenth-century book history. His academic research attracts considerable attention locally, nationally, and internationally. As a consequence of this he and White have developed a series of projects which have brought significant amounts of internal and external funding. In 2010, he project managed and created a digitisation programme and talks series that were designed to create an online library and raise awareness of John Hewitt and his library. The Hewitt Library contains approximately 5000 books, as well as his own poetry manuscripts (3000 poems) and a significant collection of manuscript material. It is one of the major collections of a Northern Irish poet's work in public hands in Ireland, and is managed by the University of Ulster on behalf of the John Hewitt estate.</p> <p>This has led to the creation of the Ulster Poetry Project which balances research into literature and book history with digital humanities and public outreach. This was officially instigated through funding from Ulster's Office of Innovation (£11,000), with further seed funding from the AHRI in 2010 (£2000), as well as three separate external awards from the Ministerial Advisory Group for an Ulster-Scots Academy (DCAL) in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (£435,603). Ferguson and White are now developing a significant digitisation programme and curriculum materials for NI Schools and the general public.</p> <p>Other projects include a National Heritage Lottery grant to create an exhibition and outreach project on the cultural heritage of John Hewitt (£61,000), which is touring museums and libraries across Northern Ireland; and a £24,000 grant from the Ulster Scots Agency to curate a multi-</p>

location exhibition of John Hewitt's links to the Ulster-Scots literary tradition.

3. References to the research

The high quality of these outputs is evidenced by their placement with major international publishers such as OUP and Four Courts.

1. Frank Ferguson, ed. *Ulster-Scots Writing: An Anthology*. Dublin. 527 pp. (Four Courts, Dublin 2008).

ISBN-13: 978-1846820748

2. Frank Ferguson, 'Ulster-Scots Literature' in *Oxford History of the Irish Book*, vol. IV, ed. James H. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 420-431.

ISBN-13: 978-0198187318

3. Frank Ferguson, 'The Industrialisation of the Irish Book' in *Oxford History of the Irish Book*, vol. IV, ed. James H. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 9-26.

ISBN-13: 978-0198187318

4. Frank Ferguson and Andrew Holmes, eds. *Revising Robert Burns and Ulster: literature, religion and politics, c. 1770-1920*. (Four Courts, Dublin, 2009).

ISBN-13: 978-1846821974

5. Frank Ferguson, 'Ulster-Scots Revival or Ullans Twilight?' in *Language Issues: Ireland, France and Spain*, eds. Wesley Hutchinson and Cliona Ní Riordáin (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 43-58.

ISBN-13: 978-9052016498

4. Details of the impact

Preserving, Conserving, And Presenting Cultural Heritage

The development of an online library of approximately 30 books has established one of the most substantial, free to access texts for Ulster Poetry in the world

(<http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulsterpoetry/> and

<http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulsterscotspoetry/index.html>). These texts form a corpus which has multiple applications for the general reader, for schools, for cultural tourism, language planning, for local and national media and cultural institutions, as well as academic users.

Informing And Influencing Policy

Ferguson has acted as a consultant with the Ministerial Advisory Committee for an Ulster-Scots Academy (MAGUS/DCAL), the Minister for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland (DCAL), and other public and private organisations in NI. His work has improved public understanding of Ulster literature, and contributed to on-going debates on Irish and Scottish cultural, linguistic and literary identity. Ferguson's academic focus on Ulster writing is particularly relevant to contemporary concerns about national identity and the place of vernacular language within the public sphere. He contributes significantly to debates on Ulster literature and history in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which are particularly pertinent within the post Good Friday framework where Ulster-Scots identities have been given much attention. [See section 5, sources 2, 5 and 9]

Influencing Design and Delivery of Curricula in Education beyond HE

Ferguson's work has assisted in the development of teaching and learning materials on Ulster-Scots literature in schools and adult education in Northern Ireland by providing students, teachers, and the general public, with free to access versions of the texts that the project has collected in conjunction with a school reader, and a literary encyclopaedia. It makes a significant contribution to the updating of subject knowledge for teachers, as well as the direct release of new material, fresh insights, and interpretations into the non-HE educational sector. [See section 5, sources 1, 5 and 7]

The project assists in the integration of Ulster-Scots literature within the NI curriculum. It delivers talks in partnership with BBC Northern Ireland and Libraries NI in venues across Northern Ireland. To date it has carried out approximately twenty poetry and/or history workshops in 10 schools across Northern and talks and workshops in 20 libraries across Northern Ireland. One

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teacher commented 'the University of Ulster helped Year 13 students explore the history, culture, and language of Ulster-Scots poetry. Pupils found the experience very enjoyable and were able to apply the knowledge gained from the workshop to their A-Level English Literature poetry anthology' (See section 5, source 11).

Enrichment of Cultural Life in Northern Ireland

The Poetry Project curated the 'Every Townland Earned its Name in Song: John Hewitt's Ulster Scots Tradition' which was launched at The John Hewitt Summer School in July 2012, and which ran in several museums, libraries, and other public cultural spaces across Northern Ireland, including: PRONI, the Marketplace Theatre (Armagh), Carnegie Library (Bangor), public libraries in Ballymena, Omagh, and Enniskillen, and the University of Ulster's Magee campus in Derry during the celebration of the City of Culture award (2013). The exhibition is based upon **Ferguson** and **White's** on-going research.

This year the project launched a new extensive exhibition based on the life, work and legacy of John Hewitt as well as the publication of his autobiography (co-edited by **Ferguson** and **White**) at the John Hewitt Summer School. This is one of the major cultural events of the year in Northern Ireland. The annual summer school is one of the most well established and significant cultural and arts events in Northern Ireland, and regularly attracts over 400 delegates per year, and boasts an international audience and reputation. This guarantees maximum media coverage for the project and demonstrated the ability of the project to engage in top-level outreach and dissemination of its research to the public, placing the project at the forefront of cultural endeavour in the province. [See section 5, sources 1, 6 and 10]

Influencing Professional Creative Practice

Ferguson is a regular contributor to the BBC Northern Ireland and consultant to television production companies, assisting them in the development of programmes. A colleague from the BBC has commented: 'the research work undertaken as part of the John Hewitt online project is of great value to on-going Ulster-Scots programmes within BBC Northern Ireland. Some of our radio and web resources make reference to the vernacular poetry of Ulster writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the fact that the original texts are now available online in an attractive and searchable format, adds significant value to our programming' (BBC NI Ulster-Scots Director, 2012). Ferguson works closely with the BBC in disseminating his research findings through media recordings and online publications: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ulsterscots/library/category/meetthe-ulster-scots#category-frank-ferguson>; and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00y1rgb/episodes/guide>. [See section 5, sources 3, 4 and 8]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Director, The John Hewitt Society
2. CEO, The Ulster-Scots Agency
3. Producer BBC Northern Ireland
4. Double Band Films
5. Heritage Officer, Belfast City Council
6. Review of Ulster Poetry Project <http://clydesburn.blogspot.co.uk/2010/07/ulster-poetry-project-university-of.html>
7. School Website <http://www.bangoracademy.org.uk/component/content/article/1-latest-news/481-poetic-licence-to-thrill>
8. Web programme commissioned by BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00y4467>
9. Citation of project on DCAL website <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/language-cultural-diversity-r08/ulster-scots.htm>
10. Feature in Belfast Newsletter <http://www.newsletter.co.uk/features/bringing-forgotten-poetry-to-life-1-3314090>
11. Email from Ashfield Girl's High School