

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: 30 - History
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Department of History has a broad range of chronological and geographical expertise. As stated in our Public Engagement and Research strategies, we seek to make our research available to the broadest possible audience, thereby enriching social, political and cultural life and contributing to the University's mission to 'change the world for the better through the power and application of our knowledge'. The main non-academic beneficiaries of our research are: readers of trade books; public audiences of lectures and television and radio programmes; internet researchers; museum and gallery visitors; local community organisations; policymakers; students in schools and at other universities. To reach these large and diverse audiences our impact activities take several forms, notably: locally organised events, talks and exhibitions; published books and articles; appearances in the press; participation in radio and TV programming; and blogs and other web-based publications. These activities generate several types of impact. Socio-cultural impact is generated by developing a sense of belonging through engagement with local, national and international history and culture; improved quality of life by encouraging and supporting reflection on topics of personal and public concern (including crime, family history, and political activism); and enhancing the quality of education through the provision of in-depth learning materials for schools and universities. Political impact is generated by encouraging public reflection on political processes and through interactions with policymakers. Economic impact is created through the sale of books, media productions, and gallery income. This impact arises from the whole chronological and geographical range of our research, including late Roman Europe, early-modern England, modern Germany, and African, Indian and American history.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>An integrated approach to impact is ensured by the combined leadership of the Head of Department (HoD), Director of Research and Innovation (DRI), and External Affairs Coordinator. All are guided by our Public Engagement Strategy, which is reviewed biennially. The External Affairs Group (comprised of staff with responsibilities for schools, digital media, and impact) is responsible for building and nurturing partnerships, coordinating Departmental activities, and promoting and championing public engagement opportunities.</p> <p>The Department considers impact at every stage of research planning. It is a regular topic at our annual research support meetings, in which each academic meets with the HoD and DRI to discuss their research plans, in annual staff reviews (SRDS), and probationary reviews. It is discussed during the planning phase of all research projects and forms a key consideration during internal peer review of funding applications. Impact is considered (and can be a powerful factor) in promotions cases. We collect information on public responses to our impact activities through postcard questionnaires, social media and web statistics, and follow-ups with event organisers; responses are reviewed, and any generic issues discussed, by the External Affairs Group.</p> <p>Our activities receive strong support from the University, which (through its Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Strategy) seeks to build external partnerships, add value to the wider city region, and embed the values and vision of impact in all University activities. Staff work with the University's media office to ensure our published research (in print and on the web) is widely publicised and to take advantage of press interest (itself a measure of impact) to discuss our work on radio and TV, as well as in popular history magazines, literary journals, and local and national newspapers. Support from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities is provided through its External Relations Director, Committee and Projects Officer, who provide advice, support, and funding. The Committee manages the Faculty's allocation from the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) through a specific action plan, <i>Arts Enterprise</i>. Since 2008 the Department has benefitted from grants totalling £22k, including support to develop its infrastructure for public engagement in <i>History Goes Public</i> (£5840), and the <i>Stories of Activism</i> project (discussed below, £9475). A further £13k has been allocated for projects in 2013-14. Our local impact activities have been developed in relationship with external organisations, our <i>History Partners</i>, which include the Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust, Barnsley Museums, the local independent cinema (the Showroom), a network of local schools, Bank Street Arts, and the University of the Third Age. We have also cultivated relationships with several civic groups, noted below. The Department nurtures such relationships over time to ensure that we understand partners' needs.</p>

Types of activities vary according to the nature of our research, potential audiences, and available opportunities but we have found the following modes of engagement particularly successful:

Publishing books with a broad public appeal, and engaging in associated activities (e.g. interviews, public lectures, use of social media) to inform, inspire and educate (books by Harvey, Middleton, Pennock, Ziemann in addition to three of our case studies).

Development of web-based resources: through projects based at the Humanities Research Institute, we have a strong track record of making high quality, research-informed editions of primary sources available to millions of internet-users. To facilitate public engagement, these resources are contextualised, fully searchable, and free to use. During the census period resources completed include *John Foxe's Acts and Monuments Online*, *Locating London's Past*, *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (case study), *London Lives 1690-1800*, and *Connected Histories*; the last three involve 8,949 voluntarily registered users in the creation of historical content.

Social media: Staff use podcasts, blogs and twitter to promote public engagement with their research. They contribute to at least nine blogs, including the Department's *History Matters*. Launched in December 2012, this features research-based essays on topics in the news; 57 articles were posted in its first 7.5 months, receiving over 17,000 unique visitors, 176 comments/trackbacks, and many more tweets. Three blogs were picked up by media outlets. With 2,164 followers, @unishistory is regularly used for comments on blogs. User engagement is also encouraged on Dobson's *Russian History Blog* and the *American History Research Wiki*.

Involvement with civil society educates and encourages reflection through staff giving talks and holding workshops to special interest groups (e.g. Jewish historical societies, local Congolese community, Hindu Samaj), historical associations (Classical Association, Historical Association), and retirement groups (Probus, University of the Third Age). Building on Foley's research into 1970s-80s political activism and the Leverhulme-funded Comparative History of Political Engagement Project, *Stories of Activism* was founded in 2011 to record Sheffield's distinctive history of political activism since the 1960s. Co-operating with the Workers' Educational Association, the project developed extensive collaborations with local BME and women's organisations, resulting in the creation of Sheffield's first activist oral history and archiving project as part of the AHRC-funded *Sheffield Political Cultures* project (spring 2013).

Collaborations with museums, galleries, heritage sites, cinemas, musical organisations, and TV and radio to contribute to the creation of cultural capital. Our staff collaborate with the researchers, curators, and organizers of arts events on exhibition displays, lectures and film showings, providing advice and content informed by their research. In 2008 Harvey helped curate part of the permanent exhibition at the Millennium Galleries' Metalwork Gallery and in 2011-12 she was the first Academic in Residence at Bank Street Arts, where she organised two exhibitions based on her research into material culture and the home. Griffiths co-curated an exhibition of *Images of farmers and farming in war and peace* at the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading; see also Nazi Power case study. Harvey's contacts with local museums led to the award in 2012 of three AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards, in partnership with Barnsley Museums and the Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust. Since 2009 staff have given pre-concert talks and participated in workshops for Music in the Round at the Crucible Theatre. They have assisted in planning film showings at the Showroom, where they have given introductory talks and chaired discussions on topics including the Spanish Civil War, Guantanamo Prison and the 1980s miners' strikes. Staff and postgraduates have also given talks at the local literary festival, 'Off the Shelf'. We work with TV and radio producers to develop quality programmes based on our research (Old Bailey and Nazi Power case studies). In a particularly innovative initiative, Heath has worked with a local band, Payroll Union, to produce an album which brings Heath's research on antebellum America to a new audience.

Policy and Political Engagement: our staff advise policymakers, contributing to political life and government practice. As Senior Editor of *History & Policy*, Bingham encourages academics to write for policymakers and has advised the team overseeing the Jimmy Savile investigation. As a leading expert in Zambian history and politics, Larmer has been consulted by officials at the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office and DfID. Takriti, a specialist on the Palestinian revolution, was invited to attend a UN seminar on the Middle East peace process (26-27/6/13). In 2012-13 Nic Dháibhéid carried out a study, 'Understanding Terrorist Lives' for the UK/US governments, for use by counter-terrorism analysts in the UK Home Office and US Department of Homeland Security.

Schools and Universities: To introduce the latest historical research into schools teaching, the Department organises events for different cohorts of pupils and briefing sessions for teachers through the *Sheffield Schools History Network*. Our 'Talking Heads' scheme has had six academics Skyping into history lessons in at least fifteen schools, and staff also give talks arising from their research at GCSE study days and sixth form colleges and conferences. Books and web resources written and created by members of the Department are widely used in both schools and undergraduate and postgraduate teaching at other universities throughout the English-speaking world (English Revolution, Nazi Power and Old Bailey case studies).

The *Department's own research-led teaching* encourages the next generation of historians to consider the relationship between academic research and the wider public, particularly in our core final-year undergraduate module, 'The Uses of History', and the MA module 'Presenting the Past: Making History Public'. In the *Hands on History* project, undergraduates work with Museums Sheffield to bring objects from their collections into Sheffield schools. Our popular MA Work Placement option enables students to gain work experience while contributing to the activities of our *History Partners*. PhD students receive training and gain experience through the Doctoral Development Programme, most notably in the module 'Practical Public Engagement'.

c. Strategy and plans

Our future plans have been developed in discussions in the External Affairs Group and Research Committee, in liaison with colleagues across the Department. They are based on an evaluation of past experiences and lessons learned, particularly about the constraints faced by public sector organisations. We are aware of the importance of investing time and resources in cultivating lasting links with external organisations and the media. We will seek to maximise the opportunities provided by the changing funding landscape, new members of staff, Faculty support, the growth of Open Access, and the evolving technologies of social media and the web. In particular, we will support the ambitious plans of six new staff appointed in 2012 (including a lecturer in Public History), and two newly funded (AHRC/ESRC) major research projects with strong impact plans ('Intoxicants and Early Modernity' and 'The Digital Panopticon').

Key future priorities are to focus more on civic engagement, social media and web publication; encourage greater participation by undergraduate and postgraduate students; and increase evaluation. Building on the experience of *Stories of Activism*, we will encourage projects which co-create research materials, making impact and research a two-way process. In 2014 the Department will employ a post-doctoral fellow with a specific remit to develop internet resources fostering public engagement in local history. Drawing on our existing digital expertise and experience with the *History Matters* blog, we will also make greater use of our Departmental website, the White Rose Online Repository, and social media to disseminate our research and encourage engagement with local, national and international audiences. Assisted by the launch of a new MA in Public Humanities and the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities, we will further incorporate impact into the training and supervision of postgraduate students. Finally, to better inform our activities, we will seek more systematic feedback from participants.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Department's case studies exemplify the approaches to impact identified in section b: through printed books aimed at informing and inspiring wide audiences, with associated public talks and media appearances (English Revolution, Political Extremism, Nazi Power); in web-based resources and by encouraging their exploitation by the media (Old Bailey); and through engagement in civil society by giving talks to local groups (Political Extremism). Since most of these activities began before our Public Engagement Strategy was written, they informed its development and evolved along with it. In particular, the highly successful impact Kershaw achieved with his books and talks was a striking example of the potential benefits of writing for a public audience; the publicity for Braddick's *God's Fury* adopted similar strategies, while also highlighting the significance of unanticipated creative responses to our work. The broad reach of the *Old Bailey Online* taught us the importance of the web, and the challenges involved in developing a dialogue with online users and the media. Gottlieb's public talks to Jewish history groups have taught us the benefits of in-depth engagement with local audiences and the importance of recording information about public responses. Overall, these early activities made us aware of the necessity of adopting different modes of engagement for different audiences; nurturing relationships and responding flexibly to new opportunities; enquiring into the needs of target audiences; and developing new methods for recording and assessing impact.