

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Dundee
Unit of Assessment: 30 History
Title of case study: The Union of 1707: Scotland and the making of the UK
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The Union of 1707 – the constitutional foundation of the modern British state – has been a controversial issue in Scottish history, society and politics for three centuries. With devolution (1999) and the forthcoming referendum (2014) interest in the history of the Union has intensified. The research project was about why Scotland surrendered her independence as a nation state in 1707 and accepted Westminster rule. The main output was Professor Whatley's 424-page monograph, *The Scots and the Union* (2006, 2007). Largely through *public engagement*, dissemination of the findings has *enhanced public understanding*, while study of the work in HEIs and schools has assured *significant educational impact*. By challenging received wisdom and contributing from an historical perspective to the current debate about Scotland's future, *civil society has been better informed*.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Initially reinforcing and refining the conclusions reached by Smout (1969), Whatley's work broke new ground in its detailed analysis of the economic causes and consequences of the Union (*Scottish Historical Review*, LXIII, 1989). Further outputs (e.g. *Understanding the Union*, 1994) led to Whatley (University of Dundee, 1992-date; chair in Scottish history, 1997-date) being described as 'the leading historian in Scotland' on the Union (*Scot Rev of Books*, 3,1, 2007).

More fundamental research from 2000 led to the publication of *The Scots and the Union* (EUP), and subsequent outputs. The principal objective was to understand why Scots parliamentarians and other key figures who actively sought or strongly supported union did so, so ending Scotland's status as an independent nation - and in the face of massive hostility. Whatley systematically tracked the political careers of Scotland's MPs from 1689 through to 1707. This innovative approach revealed a remarkable consistency in the behaviour of many of the Scottish politicians who voted for the Articles of Union in 1706-7, some of whom had supported such an arrangement at the Revolution of 1688-89 and again in 1702, when union was proposed by King William. The research also demonstrated that many people inside and outside Parliament (but in influential positions in the Church of Scotland, for example), supported union on principled grounds. Central was religion and in particular adherence to Presbyterianism. In the cases of some individuals and families this commitment was long-standing. Supporters of union in Scotland had been seared by the experience of imprisonment, torture, and exile under the Stuarts (conceptualised as 'protestant memory'). They were also hostile to Roman Catholicism, absolute monarchy and the Jacobites. Scotland's Whigs therefore sought union with Protestant England to defend new-found liberties. The creation of a British state would be a bulwark against French aggrandisement and French 'universal monarchy'.

These conclusions challenged and in the opinion of several reviewers overturned the view that had long prevailed (going back to 1714 in the case of George Lockhart of Carnwath's *Memoirs*), namely that the Scots in 1707 had been 'bought and sold for English gold' (Robert Burns) by avaricious Scottish politicians who sought to serve their own personal interests or those of their families. This major revisionist project is on-going, with a seminal article on Whig culture in Scotland, based on a plenary lecture given at the Jacobite Studies Trust International Conference in Glasgow in June 2010, 'Reformed Religion, Regime Change...and the Struggle for the "Soul" of Scotland, c.1688-c.1788', appearing in the *Scot Hist Rev* (April 2013).

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

The Scots and the Union [TSU] (Edinburgh University Press, 2006; 2007).

Persistence, Principle and Patriotism in the Making of the Union of 1707: The Revolution, Scottish Parliament and the *squadron volante*, *History*, 2007, 162-86 (with Derek J Patrick).

DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-229X.2007.00390.x

'Contesting Interpretations of the Union of 1707: The abuse and use of George Lockhart of Carnwath's Memoirs', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 27, 1, (2007), 24-47 (with Derek J. Patrick). DOI:10.3366/jshs.2007.27.1.24

'The Making of the Union of 1707: History with a History', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Scotland and the Union 1707-2007* (Edinburgh UP, 2008), 23-38.

'The Issues Facing Scotland in 1707', in S. J. Brown and C. A. Whatley (eds), *Union of 1707: New Directions* (EUP, 2008), 1-30; and *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXXVII, Supplement (2008), 1-30. DOI:10.3366/E0036924108000450

D. J. Patrick, 'The Kirk, Parliament and the Union', in Brown and Whatley (eds), *Union of 1707: New Directions* (EUP, 2008), 94-115. DOI:10.3366/E0036924108000504

TSU – the main output - won the Saltire Society's prestigious Scottish History Book of the Year prize in 2007. Evidence of the quality of the book is seen in enormously favourable peer reviews, several describing *TSU* as the best on the subject. A 'magnificent contribution...fresh, original and free from the taint of preconceived views...the most substantial work of scholarship in modern Scottish history published in the last decade' (Colin Kidd, *Jnl of Scot Hist Studs*, 27, 1, 2007). Academic reviewers were conscious of the book's contemporary relevance for non-academics, arguing that *TSU*, now 'the leading work on 1707', should be 'compulsory reading for all MSPs and media commentators...and for anyone who has an interest in Scottish history.' (*Scot Rev of Books*, 2007; and more recently see *Jnl British Studies*, Jan 2009). With the passage of time its perceived significance has grown. In 2010 *TSU* was assessed as having 'crossed a threshold' in unionist studies, with an historiographical influence on a par with P W J Riley, the leader in the field since the 1970s ('1707, 2007 and the Unionist Turn in Scottish History', *Historical Journal*, 53, 4, 1071-83.) [See section 5 (1)]

The book's reception beyond academe was exceptionally positive. Ruaridh Nicoll in *The Observer* described it as 'magnificent'; Whatley's book was 'a game changing piece of research', which had 'done the history of the period a great service, stripping away the myths and revealing sophisticated people making sophisticated decisions.' (Nicoll went on to make a BBC 2 TV documentary – 'Patriot Games' - based on the book, for which Whatley acted as the Historical Consultant.) [See section 5 (2)] Unusually for an academic monograph, the book even appeared in 'best of' in Christmas reading lists (e.g. *Scotland on Sunday*, 10 December 2006), being commended for raising the issue of whether 'this most fundamental of fractures in the Scottish psyche [over the Union] sits more comfortably as myth than as meticulously explored fact.'

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

Impact from 2008 is part of a continuum which commenced at the time of the publication of *TSU* late in 2006. The means by which the research has been promoted and contributes to public understanding of the Union issue from an historical perspective was in part the result of the reviews outlined above. Publication of *TSU* resulted in a host of invited public lectures in the UK as well as overseas between 2006 and 2008 (e.g. Jill Mackenzie Memorial Lecture, University of Guelph, Canada; British Studies Centre, University of Oslo; Haldane Lecture, University of Leicester; University of Edinburgh, and at leading cultural institutions such as the National

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Galleries of Scotland and the National Museum of Scotland), there were numerous media appearances (e.g. BBC2 Newsnight), which brought the work to the attention of the general public. [See section 5 (3) and 5 (6)]

The paperback or 'trade' edition of *TSU* has continued to sell since its publication in 2006 (second edition 2007), mainly in the UK but also Canada and the USA. *TSU* sold more copies than any other book via *History Scotland's* website between 2006 and 2010. [See section 5 (4) and (5)] A new, revised and extended edition, commissioned to contribute to the current debate on Scotland's future in the UK, has been prepared for publication (early 2014, as *TSU: Then and Now*). Between end-September 2007 and April 2013 Patrick gave a series of public talks at local history societies, Rotary and Probus clubs (a total of at least 14, to a combined audience of 700) on the Union. He communicated with a wider TV audience through his participation in the BBC's 'Scotland's Clans' series (BBC 2, 2 November 2009; BBC 1, 20 February 2012). Further evidence of how the research has informed and illuminated understanding beyond Dundee is that the paper 'The Issues Facing Scotland in 1707' (see 3 above), prepared for a symposium on the Union in May 2007 hosted by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's leading learned academy was until early in 2012 the *Scottish Historical Review's* most downloaded paper from Edinburgh University Press's journals website. Nicoll (*Observer*, above), commented that he couldn't imagine 'how a historian could make more impact into a debate of such crucial importance to the future of Scotland and the United Kingdom' (5 August 2013). [See section 5 (2) and (6)]

With the forthcoming referendum, a new round of invitations to participate in public discussion has begun, e.g. 'Liberty, Fairness and Ideas of Justice' symposium, the focus of which was Scotland in the Union (Scottish Parliament, November 2011). In January 2012 Whatley led discussion at a private meeting of Scottish politicians (from the Scottish, UK and European Parliaments) on legitimate approaches to the Union of 1707 in 2014. That the research has generated impact beyond Scotland is indicated by invitations to Whatley to contribute to UK discussion forums on Union-related issues (e.g. mixed audience symposium, 'What Good is the Union', Christ Church, Oxford, February 2013); recent media appearances include the Jeremy Vine Show (BBC Radio 2, 25 January 2012), and Michael Goldfarb's BBC Radio 4 programme – The F-Word, A History of Federalism (27 August 2012), where the British union was discussed as a model for European relations now and in the future. *The Scotsman* (27 November 2012) published a centre-page article by Whatley ('Battle for hearts and minds') that argued, on the basis of historical comparison – with 1706-7 - that the current pro-Union campaign should create a more positive case for their position. Internationally, interest in Scotland's past and future within the UK is growing. An in-depth interview Whatley gave to the Catalan journalist Inigo Gurruchaga for *El Correo* was picked up and published (18 October 2012) in at least three other Spanish news publications including, *Laverdad.es*, *Lavozdigital.es* and *La Rioja*. A similar interview, explaining the Scottish referendum in historical context appeared in Greece's best selling Sunday broadsheet *To Vima* (22 October). Whatley chairs the University of Dundee's Five Million Questions project, established in January 2013, a platform designed to better inform the public (including young voters) by lectures, debates, symposia, publications, and blogs about referendum-related issues (<http://www.fivemillionquestions.org>), with several public engagement events stemming from this (e.g. Understanding the Independence Referendum, U3A, Perth, 3 June 2013).

A lasting legacy of the research is the extensive database compiled as part of the project on the Union, of commissioners (MPs) to the Scottish Parliament 1689-1707, showing their constituencies, and voting behaviour on the Union divisions. This is now held in perpetuity by the National Records of Scotland (item reference number GD1/1414/1-2), in Edinburgh. Recognising the significance of the book the NRS Conservation team re-bound and customised a copy of it, for long-term preservation.

TSU is now cited as a matter of course by historians of Scotland/Britain (e.g. Devine/Wormald, eds, *Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, 2012), but also by commentators and scholars in other disciplines (e.g. I McLean et al, eds, *Scotland's Choices*, EUP, 2013). *TSU* is also on undergraduate reading lists at virtually every university where the Union of 1707 is taught either as a topic in its own right or as part of courses that deal with longer periods in Scottish (and British)

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history – and politics. Whatley's work is drawn upon and quoted from in the materials for school pupils studying for the Scottish Qualifications Authority Higher History paper (extracts from the work formed examination questions in 2010, 2011 and 2012). Source materials deriving from the Union project – secondary and primary - are available online on the Education Scotland (ES) website (for the Treaty of Union, 1689-1740 topic), and for which Patrick was an academic adviser. The impact of the research on young people studying history in Scotland by providing an academically robust counterpoint to Jacobite-informed readings of Scottish history is underpinned by Whatley's contribution in 2007 to the Scottish Association of History Teachers' *History Teaching Review Yearbook* – a well-used reference tool - and again in 2012, when he wrote on the related subject of the Whigs and their influence in Scotland in the later seventeenth century and beyond.

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

- (1) Raffe, Alasdair (2010) 1707, 2007, and the Unionist turn in Scottish history. *The Historical Journal*, 53 (04). pp. 1071-1083. ISSN 0018-246X _ arguing significance of the work in terms of historiography of Union.
- (2) Arts Editor, *The Observer* to corroborate the impact of the work for the media.
- (3) The Chief Executive, Royal Society of Edinburgh to comment on the impact within the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's leading learned academy.
- (4) The Editor, Edinburgh University Press to comment on sales of *TSU* and corroboration on claims for ongoing public interest in the book and related papers published by EUP
- (5) Corroboration from the former proprietor and editor of *History Ireland* and *History Scotland* magazines.
- (6) The Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Scotland to comment on impact beyond the academy, e.g. for Scottish political activists.