

Institution: Newman University
Unit of Assessment: 30 – History
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The History Team at Newman consists of a small but highly focused group of staff that have a longstanding commitment to the promotion of public understandings of the past.</p> <p>The main non-academic user groups/beneficiaries/audiences for our research are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs, local councillors and members of political parties/public with an interest in the history of the modern Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties • Members of the public who are interested in the Classics and Ancient History • Teachers and students in Higher and Secondary Education <p>The principal types of impact relevant to our research have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving and presenting cultural heritage • Knowledge transfer of that heritage • Raising public and political awareness of historical traditions • Informing and influencing the Secondary and Higher Education curriculum <p>These principal types of impact are related to the spectrum of research activity in the unit in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff within the UOA share a common over-arching goal of making links between the critical academic study of the past and contemporary society, as demonstrated by the involvement of staff members with organization such as the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Archives and the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery • Members of the UOA are actively engaged in sharing the fruits of their research with both teachers and interested members of the public by giving seminars to the Friends of the Centre for West Midlands History and the Birmingham branch of the Historical Association.
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The unit's approach to interacting with non-academic users/beneficiaries/audiences during the period 2008-2013 has been characterised by building upon already established networks of influence and public engagement and making use of technology to reach a wider audience by the creation of online resources for public use. For example, to develop impact from our research, staff in the unit have interacted, engaged and developed relationships with national and local politicians, secondary school teachers and interested members of the public. Evidence of these relationships and interactions is demonstrated by their attendance at conferences organized by members of the team and virtual traffic on websites, such as Facebook and Twitter.</p> <p>In undertaking these activities, the unit has made use of the institution's support facilities and infrastructure, including the External Engagement Coordinator, who enables impact across the University's units. This has led to collaborations with a variety of significant partners including: Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Black Country Living Museum and Severn Trent Water. We provide a range of support to cultural and heritage organizations through our expertise in the social and political history of the West Midlands. For example, Dr Cawood was interviewed by Patrick Burns, chief political correspondent for BBC Midlands Today, for a special segment on the life and legacy of Joseph Chamberlain, which aired on 27 August 2013. Dr Chris Upton was the historical consultant for the BBC2 series <i>Peaky Blinders</i> which aired nationally in September and October 2013.</p> <p>Drawing on a range of research conducted in the unit, Upton and Cawood are also serving as</p>

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academic consultants for *Block Capital*, the £52,000 project run by Wolverhampton Art Gallery and financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund on the history of 1960s tower blocks in the Black Country (2013-14). Cawood and Upton were also co-organizers and presenters at the public study day 'Celebrating John Bright MP' on the bicentenary of his birth; this event was organized and sponsored by Newman University, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham City Council, the Liberal History Group and local Quakers; it was held in the Gas Hall of the Museum and Art Gallery in 19 November 2011 and featured a keynote by Bill Cash, currently the MP for Stone.

The unit's approach to impact is aligned to Newman's overall mission, which states that as an institution we seek to make a positive difference to individuals and communities through the contribution of our staff, students and graduates. Over the majority of the census period this has shaped our wider HEI strategy on impact, which in turn has been based on the government's November 2009 publication of 'Higher Ambitions: the future of universities in the knowledge economy'. As such, our strategic approach has been aimed at strengthening our contribution to social justice, regional development and community cohesion. Commitment to the world outside our campus is axiomatic for Newman University, with its foundation in Catholic social teaching and its roots in teacher education. In particular, the notion of community is central to this tradition, embracing wider ideas of fellowship, openness and collaboration alongside more practical and specific responsibilities to our partners, especially with regard to the distinctive role that Newman can play in its locality and region. This has therefore been central to the unit's approach.

c. Strategy and plans

The unit has developed its strategy for impact in the future by working with the Institution's recently appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Scholarship and with other units in the field of the Humanities (specifically Theology, English and Drama) to design and implement a long-term common approach for the Humanities at Newman. This strategy rests on, but is not confined to, developing the reach and significance of our impact on the public and heritage sectors by building on existing strengths, such as the established relationships already in place between the Institution and voluntary groups, churches, and public organisations (such as libraries, museums and art galleries) in the West Midlands region. In particular, the unit is furthering its strategy for impact by continuing to strengthen our existing links with local and regional heritage organizations, including plans to develop a PGCert in Heritage and Public History in partnership with Black Country Living Museum and an interdisciplinary MA in Victorian Studies in collaboration with Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Our plans for impact from the unit's research in the future are to enlarge the range of public engagement activities and stimulate the attendance of interested members of the public at conferences and events organized by members of the team. For example, Dr Cawood is organizing in partnership with Birmingham City Council an international conference in July 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the death of Joseph Chamberlain. This event not only has the support and involvement of local city council members, but will also have financial backing from Birmingham City Council, Severn Trent Water and the Liberal History Group and has received endorsement from both the Conservative and Labour History Groups. The event will attract a wide-ranging audience, including MPs and national political figures and advisors and will culminate in a political debate, open to the public, to be held in the lecture theatre in the new Library of Birmingham.

Our goals for impact from the unit's research in the future are:

- To extend the number of individuals and organizations influenced by the research of staff within the History UOA
- To implement more effective evaluation mechanisms to better measure impact (in both the short term and over a longer period)
- To provide staff within the unit with further training and support for bid writing in order to attract more external funding to support engagement with community and the impact agenda.

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d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies relate to the unit's approach to achieving impact, as described in (b) above, in that they have reached outside of our campus to engage with national and local politicians, secondary school teachers and interested members of the public to promote evidence-based understandings of the past. Thus, the blog *Pop Classics* from Case Study 2 makes creative use of technology through links to Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider non-academic audience. The case studies informed aspects of the approach in as much as staff within the UOA sought to respond to the needs of these audiences in creating and refining the blog posts and in choosing topics for public seminars/presentations, for example. The effectiveness of these resources was evaluated, with the audiences, and this feedback is already informing the planning of future events and activities.