

<b>Institution:</b> UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA30
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shifting perceptions of the Chartist movement
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Chartism (1838-58) was effectively Britain's civil rights movement. Professor Malcolm Chase's research has helped drive a reappraisal of Chartism that has asserted the movement's relevance to contemporary British democracy and citizenship. The work has directly shaped Parliament's representation of its own history and inspired a change in its curatorial policy. It has also fuelled a broader rediscovery of the movement as a grass-roots political and social movement engaging all levels of society. Working with broadcast and print media, Chase has developed public awareness of the political, social and international dimensions of the movement and its centrality to the fight for democracy. The work has also had significant impacts in Australia, promoting an informed understanding of the black Chartist William Cuffay, and on the family history community.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Chase is solely responsible for the underpinning research, all of it undertaken at the University of Leeds where he has been employed since 1982. This research has exhaustively trawled archival and printed sources and has been updated as new material has been discovered.</p> <p>The main output (<i>Chartism: A New History</i> [1]) was hailed as 'a landmark in published works on Chartism' (review in <i>History</i>, 2008). Totalling some 190,000 words, it provides the first fully comprehensive, critical account of Chartism across both the whole of its existence (1838-58) and all four kingdoms of the UK. It probes the scope and character of a movement that was able to gather 3.3 million signatories for its 1842 petition to Parliament, at a time when Britain's population was c. 18.5 million. It explores the characters and aspirations of those who called themselves Chartists. Located firmly within British historical writing's notable tradition of 'history from below', it conveys the sweep and character of a movement that commanded over three million supporters at its height with (and this is one of its key research insights) description and evaluation of the experience of 'grass roots' activists. This is achieved by chapters of narrative (thickened by analysis) alternating with 'Chartist Lives', stylistically distinct essays that relate the intimate and personal to the realms of the social and political.</p> <p>Chartism is thus presented in a new light by disaggregating 'the Chartists' to explore through micro-biography the Chartist experience as lived, for example, by seven-year-old Ann Dawson, journeyman tailor William Cuffay (born of Caribbean slave parentage), working-class schoolteacher Elizabeth Neesom, and powerloom weaver Richard Pilling. As an Australian blogger comments, 'Chase's version of Chartism is a "history from below", within a "history from below" ... resurrecting his actors from history's submerged realms' ( <a href="http://radicalsdney.blogspot.co.uk/p/notes-on-radicalism.html">http://radicalsdney.blogspot.co.uk/p/notes-on-radicalism.html</a> (Australian-based despite its URL; accessed 26/09/13).</p> <p>Complementing and reinforcing Output 1, items 2-6 explore particular aspects of Chartism. All address deep-seated problems in the historiography of the movement, but it is their broader scope and character that has captured wider attention. The key insight of outputs 2 and 5 is to demonstrate that the Chartist Land Plan was neither nostalgic nor reactionary. Output 3 establishes for the first time the extent and purposefulness of Chartism as an aspiring parliamentary force (instead of, simply, as an extra-parliamentary pressure group). Output 4 combined analytical rigour with a focus on Teesside, a neglected region. Chase's continuing research into Teesside led to this revised republication. Output 6 presents the first-ever focussed research into the iconography of Chartism.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>1] Malcolm Chase, <i>Chartism: A New History</i>, Manchester University Press, 2007, x + 420pp. [Nominated from Manchester University Press for the Wolfson Prize for History, 2008; translated into French as <i>Le chartisme. Aux origines du mouvement ouvrier britannique, 1838-1858</i></p>

(Publications de l'Université Sorbonne, May 2013); *output returned in RAE2008; available on request*

2] Malcolm Chase, "'Wholesome object lessons': the Chartist Land Plan in retrospect", *English Historical Review*, vol. 118 (475), February 2003, pp. 59-85. DOI 10.1093/ehr/118.475.59 [*output returned in RAE2008; available on request*]

3] Malcolm Chase, Malcolm Chase, "'Labour's candidates": Chartist challenges at the parliamentary polls, 1839-1860', *Labour History Review*, vol. 74(1), 1 April 2009, pp. 64-89. DOI 10.1179/174581809X408401 [*output returned in REF2014*]

4] Malcolm Chase, 'Chartism, 1838-1858: responses in two Teesside towns'. In *The Peoples Charter: Democratic Agitation in Early Victorian Britain*, ed. S. Roberts, pp. 152-173, London: Merlin Press, 2003 [updated version of article first published in *Northern History* 24 (1988), reprinted in a volume intended to 'gather together the most significant essays on Chartism which have appeared in academic journals' (editor's preface, p. 4); *available on request*]

5] Malcolm Chase, "'We wish only to work for ourselves": the Chartist Land Plan', *Living and Learning: Essays in Honour of J.F.C.Harrison*, eds M.Chase and I. Dyck, pp. 133-48, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996 [*Output returned in RAE1996; available on request*]

6] Malcolm Chase, 'Building identity, building circulation: engraved portraiture and the *Northern Star*', in J.Allen and O.Ashton (eds), *Papers for the People*, Merlin Press, 2005 [*Output returned in RAE2001; available on request*]

#### Key research grants

- Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A Reassessment*. Sponsor: Arts & Humanities Research Council (RL/ 1118280), 1 February – 31 May 2006, £14,013
- Malcolm Chase, grant to assist publication of [1] from the Marc Fitch Fund for Research into English Local History, 2007, £1,000 [the maximum grant made by this trust]

#### 4. Details of the impact

##### Introduction

On February 13, 2013, a House of Commons Early Day Motion (EDM) signed by 77 MPs, including senior figures from the Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Labour, Scottish Nationalist, Plaid Cymru and several Northern Irish parties laid down

That his House celebrates the 175th anniversary of the launch of the People's Charter on 8 May 1838 which was a blue print for our Parliamentary democracy; salutes the men and women of the Chartist Movement across the UK who sacrificed so much to achieve universal adult suffrage; acknowledges the Black Chartist leader William Cuffay and others who were transported to Australia for striving for political justice; recognises that it was left to the Suffragist and Suffragette movements to win universal female suffrage; [and] notes the subsequent roles of political parties in legislating for many of the Chartist demands including the secret ballot.[a]

Although there had been previous EDM's about Chartism, none had gathered significant cross-party support. The motion was proposed by the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Archives and History who has explained that he 'established contact with Malcolm Chase in 2013 to seek his advice to help raise awareness and support in parliament for the recognition and memorialization of the work of the Chartists and Chartists movement ... I wanted to work with the leading current Chartist historian and that is widely recognized to be Malcolm Chase. I have been aware of Malcolm's research in this area for over 20 years.'[b]

The Chair of the All Party Group said he had been advised by Chase about the content of the EDM and Chase was 'very helpful in achieving the proper balance and historical content of the EDM.' He said this fed directly into the support gained by the EDM: 'it is really quite radical to have such a range of parties represented. I believe it is down to the quality of advice and information that Chase provided, because Chase has shown how Chartism has impacted on all parties and how over time all parties adopted most of the Chartist demands.'[b]

### Impact on Parliament

The EDM has been part of a broader reappraisal by parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of the legacy of Chartism. Chase and his research have been important to this process.[b] Following the EDM, Chase advised curatorial staff of the Parliamentary Art Collection on a temporary exhibition about Chartism in the House of Commons' No Lobby (16 July-18 October 2013). The No Lobby is part of MPs' working lives and also a fixture on public tours of Parliament: estimated visitors to the exhibition during its first fortnight were in excess of 14,300. Chase worked closely with curators designing the exhibition, identifying many of the key exhibits and writing much of the explanatory text. The display reflected Chase's research including its depiction of Chartism as a grass-roots social movement (the black Chartist Cuffay is, for instance, prominently featured).

In February 2013 Chase was invited to give the All Party Parliamentary Group on History and Archives annual lecture on the Chartist movement (in October 2013 and to be held for the first time in the Speaker's State Rooms). On 14 May 2013 the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art decided to establish a permanent Chartism exhibition. Chase has had a similar role in this development as he had in the earlier temporary display. The Parliamentary Art Collection Curator's Office confirms that Chase's research, notably output 6, has contributed to knowledge about their existing collections and led to a change in their collection and exhibition development: 'we are now much more informed and have a better understanding of the objects in our collection'.[c] The Speaker's Advisory Committee also agreed to assign a budget to improving Parliament's collection in this area; the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group links that decision to 'Malcolm Chase's research [showing] that Chartism is not well represented in the collections.'[b] He also underlines the profound significance of the change in Parliament's policy: 'This is the first ever acknowledgement in Parliament of the legacy and influence of Chartism on the development of this parliament and modern democracy internationally'.[b]

### Impact on cultural life and public discourse

Chase has also worked to inform the public about Chartism and explain its relevance to contemporary citizenship. Examples of this work include:

- Contributions to Radio 4's weekly magazine *Making History* (Radio Joint Audience Research [RAJAR] estimated listenership for this slot = 700-800K), e.g. to give a historical perspective on the Alternative Vote Referendum (April 2011).
- Chase writes regularly for popular history publications, notably BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*. Specifically Chartist-related pieces include 'Factory Reform', (February 2008) and 'One man, one vote' (Spring 2008).
- He was advisor for *BBC History Magazine's* feature 'Where History Happened: Chartism' (September 2009; National Readership Survey = 226K); now freely accessible on-line.[d].
- Chase has given 14 talks on Chartism (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to non-HEI audiences, ranging from a dayschool organised by the Barnsley Black & Ethnic Minorities Initiative to the opening of an exhibition gallery in Nantyglo & Blaina, South Wales.

A particular area of engagement has been explaining Chartism's continuing relevance to our physical environment. Having advised (1998) the National Trust on its purchase and restoration of Rosedene, the last 'unimproved' Chartist Land Plan cottage, Chase regularly broadcasts on related issues. Appearances have included:

- Radio4 *Escape to the Country* (April 2010; RAJAR=1,000K)
- Radio4 (November 2010) social affairs documentary: *Guerrilla Gardeners* (RAJAR=500K)
- ITV1 *Britain's Secret Homes* (June 2013). 'MC was identified by researchers on the programme as the leading national expert on Chartism', comments the producer. 'His presentation of the information [on Rosedene] bridged the gap between academic study and public interest ... [and] had an impact on the knowledge of the production team, and their approach to the content and presentation'.[e]

### William Cuffay and international impact

Chase was not the first historian to write about the Chartist activist William Cuffay, but his 'Chartist Lives' micro-biographical approach,[1] situating Cuffay within Chartism as a whole, has enhanced understanding of this activist's importance in both the UK and Australia.

- Chase was advisor to Radio4's feature, *Britain's Black Radical: William Cuffay* (July 2010; RAJAR=400K). Interviewed, he detailed Cuffay's trade union and political career, leading to his transportation to Tasmania in 1849. An Australian community activist 'listened to the program online and a whole world of political transportation to Australia was opened up for me ... Chase's part in that program in particular encouraged me to discover more about William Cuffay's life in Australia'.[f]
- This activist then created <http://cuffay.blogspot.co.uk/> (Australian-based despite its URL), the first-ever website devoted to William Cuffay (c. 1,000 monthly hits during 2013).[f]
- The Australian Broadcasting Corporation also invited Chase to contribute to a national radio documentary on Cuffay (c. 60K broadcast audience and 38K podcast), subsequently re-edited for 'ABC Splash' schools' broadcasting.[g]
- The creator of the Cuffay website believes Chase's research is 'a key factor in the widespread upsurge of interest in Chartism as an early civil rights movement. His ability to convey the complexities of history in an engaging way to a broad audience has certainly played an important part in widening public understanding'. Ensuing Australian interest includes several publications on Cuffay and a Senate adjournment debate speech honouring him by the Government Deputy Chief Whip.[f]

### Family historians

Chase provided advice, a complete proper-name index to Output 1[h], and biographical details of all known Teesside Chartists (research conducted for Output 4)[i], for the website *Chartist Ancestors*. Receiving c.130 visits daily, *Chartist Ancestors* is among the most sophisticated non-commercial genealogy websites. Its manager comments that 'it is hard to believe that Chartism would be such a popular area for non-academic history without Professor Chase's engagement with non-academic historians such as myself'.[j]

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a] <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/early-day-motions/edm-detail1/?session=2012-13&ednumber=1088> (accessed 26/09/13)
- b] Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Archives and History (letter 5 June 2013) \*
- c] Deputy Curator, Parliamentary Art Collection Curator's Office (email 24 September 2013) \*
- d] <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/where-history-happened-chartism> (accessed 26/09/13)
- e] Producer/Director of 'Britain's Secret Homes' (ITV1 June 2013): email 10 April 2013\*
- f] Creator of <http://cuffay.blogspot.co.uk/> (accessed 25/09/13): emails 18/01 and 23/01/12 and 26/09/13 \*
- g] *Hindsight*, 'The Isle of Denial: William Cuffay in Van Diemen's Land' (Australia Broadcasting Corporation 31 July 2011); available as archived podcast from the ABC Radio National website at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/the-isle-of-denial-william-cuffay-in-van-diemens/2925954>. (Accessed 25/09/13)
- h] 'Chase's index', <http://www.chartists.net/Chase-s-index-of-Chartists.htm> (accessed 26/09/13)
- i] *Chartist Ancestors*: 'Chartists in Middlesbrough', <http://www.chartists.net/Middlesbrough-Chartists.htm> and 'Chartists in Stockton-on-Tees, Thornaby-on-Tees and Hartlepool' <http://chartist-ancestors.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/240-chartists-in-stockton-on-tees.html> (both accessed 26/09/13)
- j] *Chartist Ancestors* Site Manager: email 18/01/12 \*

\* **May be contacted directly to provide corroboration (contact details provided)**