

<p>Institution: University of Ulster</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 History</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The impact of historical research at Ulster relates most of all to professional user groups in education (school teachers and pupils), the media (journalists, TV producers and research assistants), web-based history providers, museum curators and archivists, local, national, and international government initiatives around commemorations and the role of history in public life, and non-governmental public institutions that are concerned with historical aspects of their work (in for example health provision). The reach and significance of the impact therefore affects education, public discourse and cultural life, and policy making and economic prosperity. This range of impact flows from the remit of our research units, most notably the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies (CISS) and the Centre for the Study of the History of Medicine in Ireland (CHOMI), that engage with social, cultural, and economic issues. It is also embedded in individual research programmes whose originality flows into public discussion and perception of the past. This is achieved, for example, through direct public engagement (public talks) and a media presence. In this History at UU is especially able to exploit strong expertise in Irish history from the early to the contemporary period. The Irish context is a fertile environment for an on-going interface between academic expertise and the wider society.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>History at Ulster has a long-standing tradition of impact across a range of stakeholders and user groups. The following areas have been prioritised:</p> <p>Impact on Public Policy: Strength in Irish history is exploited to forge close working relationships with politicians and civil servants and the heritage industry as they grapple with the problem of the historical context of on-going political issues. Kelly and Ó Ciardha, for example, serve as historical advisors to politicians and curators across Northern Ireland and the Republic. McCormick is a stakeholder in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and sits on its user group. Crooke's research into museum policy and practice has fed into public policy in several ways: in written and oral evidence to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's 2011 review into the value of museums; as member of policy committees (Board of Directors, Northern Ireland Museums Council, 2006-9, 2012-2015), Museum Standards Programme Advisory Committee of the Heritage Council Ireland (2007-); and as specialist advisor for collaborative project between Fermanagh County Museum, Derry Heritage, and Inniskillings Museum on 'Collecting Cultures'.</p> <p>Impact on Professional Practice: Education Beyond HEI: The group forges links with public institutions and bodies and service providers of history to the broader community. Staff members take on administrative positions within local community based historical associations whose remit is to bring the fruits of historical research to non-HEI users. O'Connor, for example, is chair of the local branch of the Historical Association and arranges links between teachers and schools and Ulster historians. There is thus a lively and frequent engagement and programme of talks in schools across the north coast. A highlight is the long-standing A-level annual conference at the Somme Heritage Centre at which staff present their research. Thatcher has developed close ties with the public education provider Sovereign Education. This has resulted in numerous A-level conference presentations and on-going contact with schools and colleges. This has informed historical knowledge amongst teachers and students and impacted on the way topics in Russian and Soviet history are taught in schools. Sneddon gave six lectures (2010-13) to community and education groups across Ireland, and gave a seminar to secondary school children on the criminal justice system in Ireland on behalf of Down County Museum. Blackstock also was invited to the museum to address a colloquium on the 1798 rebellion (Oct 2011).</p> <p>Historical research is disseminated to school and college audiences through writing shorter summary finding articles of research for popular or pre-University history magazines. Thatcher, for example, published his novel interpretation of Khrushchev's memoirs in <i>History Review</i>. This article is also available on-line via the <i>History Today</i> web pages. Kelly and Ó Ciardha produced pedagogical booklets for use in schools (see case study 1). Sneddon and Ó Ciardha have published in the popular magazine, <i>History Ireland</i>, an important outlet for engaging with the Irish public and pre-university students.</p> <p>Digital means to make research accessible to a broader audience is an important strand of our strategy to inform pre-University students. Several of Thatcher's talks that draw upon his own research can be accessed for download at http://www.thehistoryfaculty.com. These also allow for</p>

students to comment on the usefulness of the podcast and to seek further clarification.

Impact on Professional Practice: Museums, Archivists, Professional Associations: History and historical research skills are a crucial part of numerous non-academic professions. The Unit's strategy to reach particular user groups has been to utilise its research centres to forge broader community links that will enable the further dissemination and public impact of its research with particular reference to professional practice. CHOMI has facilitated greater understanding between academics and archivists via the development of links with the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. An open conference of June 2012, for example, focused upon Health and Welfare in the archives. The research expertise of CHOMI advised on the retention and disposal of medical records and this led to changes in the practices of archivists. **Crooke** is a regular speaker at public-university knowledge exchange forums, for example at an AHRC funded workshop between the National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh (June 2011), and at a Victoria and Albert Museum international conference (March 2010). **Sneddon** co-organised the tercentenary celebrations for Sir Patrick Dun's Library for the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin in 2012. In October 2012, **Blackstock** was invited to join the Royal Irish Academy Committee for Historical Sciences, which advocates with government for the discipline. McCormick was advisor to the NHS for a Mental Health Exhibition, which was launched in October 2013.

Impact on Creative Practice: History is a popular topic for television and newspapers. Historical research at Ulster has directly impacted upon creative practice in this field. **McCormick's** research in social and gender history of twentieth-century Belfast and Northern Ireland, for example, featured in the programme *Titanic the Mission* (Channel 4 and National Geographic, September 2010) and in *Titanic the Commemoration* (BBC2, April 2012). **Ó Ciardha's** specialist knowledge of early modern Irish history was showcased in eleven broadcasts in which he has acted as narrator, historical consultant, and as presenter; see: *Imeacht na nIarlaí: The Flight of the Earls* (TG4), *Plandáil/The Plantation of Ulster* (BBC Ulster), *Ballaí Dhoire/Derry's Walls* (TG4/BBC). **Hughes** was selected to participate in a joint AHRC/BBC workshop on Scottish identity (April 2013), which brought together fifteen researchers to inform and influence BBC programming in the lead up to the independence referendum and Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Impact in Public Remembrance: History is a living part of contemporary life in Northern Ireland in which the past is ever present and particularly in public remembrance of the past. Historical research at Ulster impacts upon the way in which the past is presented to local communities. **Kelly** is Secretary to the Board of the Monreagh Ulster Scots Heritage Centre in Donegal and a board member of the Ulster American Folk Museum at Omagh. In these roles he also designed, taught, and managed Ulster staff input on history courses for local cross-community and reconciliation groups, gave numerous individual lectures and developed a range of community-based starter courses, resulting in three locally produced publications. **Loughlin's** research was drawn upon to produce the panel texts for a 2012 exhibition *Connection and Division 1910-1930* held at the Tower Museum Derry and Enniskillen Castle, Fermanagh, and was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund with the purpose of 'challenging preconceptions and highlighting hidden histories'.

Economic Impact: Tourism and the Heritage Industry: History is an essential part of the fabric of communities and societies in post-conflict Northern Ireland. Another element of our strategy has been to be at the forefront of combining historical expertise with the presentation and preservation of the past in public space to promote tourism and the development of the tourist industry. Kelly, for example, accessed funding, researched, designed and opened the Monreagh Manse Heritage Centre in County Donegal to develop tourism in NW Ulster around its history. **Kelly** and **Ó Ciardha** are historical consultants to public bodies, for example, the Maritime Museum. **Ó Ciardha** and **Kelly's** research expertise was utilised in several important contexts, from advising Derry City Council and ILEX (A Derry urban regeneration company) on their application for UNESCO World Heritage Site status to their work as consultants for a successful £1.5 million award for the Saint Colmcille Heritage Centre. While **Blackstock** was consultant for the National Trust's Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre exhibition (2012). **MacRaid** was advisor and narrative writer for a new, permanent exhibition on immigration to North East of England at Tyneside's Discovery Museum.

Outreach and the General Public: The strategy to impact upon public engagement with historical research has been two-fold. First through a public presence in local communities. Staff receive financial support for outreach activities, both in the form of visiting talks and in inviting public bodies into the University. On this basis, we are regular speakers at village, town and city institutions. **Sneddon**, for example, delivered a talk to the Leitrim's Women's Group in Co Sligo on

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gender and witchcraft in September 2011, and one on 'Witchcraft, magic and demonic possession in early modern Ireland' to the Cumann Staire in November 2010. This in turn received prominent coverage on the association's web pages. The aim is to be proactive in making links with community groups that could benefit from the historical research expertise within History at Ulster. **Blackstock** has organised successive, successful summer schools since 2009, and these are held in historic sites in Belfast aimed specifically at bringing his expertise in modern Northern Irish history to the wider community. In 2010 the intake of 47 included 20 members of the East Tennessee Historical Society interested in Ulster Scots ancestry. Secondly, web based outlets are exploited to reach an audience outwith the HEI sector. **Thatcher**, for example, gave an interview to an on-line literary site in which he explained the attractions and difficulties of working on Leon Trotsky (see: <http://vulpeslibris.wordpress.com/2010/08/31/trotsky-q-a-ian-thatcher/>). Public engagement with this is clear from on-page comments.

c. Strategy and plans

The strategy for the future is to maintain and strengthen the high level of impact activity outlined. Examples of how the current strategy projects into the future include:

Blackstock's development of a research project on the Irish aspect of the theatre producer Tyrone Guthrie. At the point of conception we are discussing how this can involve co-operation and impact between the individual research and groups beyond academia. This project will include primarily **Blackstock** and PRONI (where all Guthrie's papers are) and Annaghmakerrig the residential Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Monaghan. So far the intention is to involve a public summer school, research co-ordination between the various centres, and the BBC for a programme. The public and inter-organisational interaction here is typical of the strategy to engage and reach beyond academia. Consequently an HLF application has been developed with Premier Theatre Company to fund events, a travelling exhibition and workshops for Key Stage 2 schoolchildren. Also exploring HLF support is **McCormick**, who is developing public engagement projects involving CHOMI, the Ulster Society for the History of Medicine, schools, the local health centre in Ballymoney and a collection of historical medical artefacts and instruments displayed in the health centre. The plan is to use research expertise in CHOMI to improve the existing exhibition to increase public involvement and use and to create a smaller portable exhibition that could be taken into schools to change teaching and learning practice on the history of medicine.

Sneddon's research into Irish witchcraft and most notably his original discoveries about the likely forged evidence at the trial of the Islandmagee witches achieved wide media interest and large public response (e.g. *Sunday Life*, *Belfast Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *Irish Independent*, *BBC Radio Ulster*, *TV3 Morning Show*, *Newstalk*). Seeking to take this further Sneddon is planning a proposal to the BBC for a documentary based on his research on Irish witchcraft.

Kirby is audio-visually recording an on-going and expanding oral history project into church history in the Cold War era (Witness seminar programme) and uploading these onto popular web outlets (see, for example, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irYfvL0BS4k>).

d. Relationship to case studies

Our three case studies flow directly from our close relationship to those who present the past to audiences beyond academia and illustrate on-going commitment to engagement with the community, local and central government, and with media outlets. The **Loughlin** (2) and **Ó Ciardha** (3) case studies illustrate how historical research impacts on creative practice through historical knowledge and how it is presented in TV documentaries. The reach in turn may have altered how numerous viewers understood these events. The **Kelly** and **Ó Ciardha** (1) case study is complex as it involves a rolling impact over time that encapsulates several strands of our research impact strategy. It includes public interaction via museum exhibitions, educational booklets, and public talks. It involves governmental consultation via committee membership and economic impact as this political aspect was geared towards the bid for Derry/Londonderry to become UK City of Culture. Organising conferences that involved academics, politicians, businessmen, and members of the public required large-scale institutional support, both in terms of time and advice as applications were made to funding bodies, and these activities in turn were exploited by public and private bodies to secure funding and support for a range of cultural activities and developments, such as the new Derry Maritime Museum. Case Study 1 is a prime example of how research into early modern Irish history has a very contemporary public impact across several areas.