

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol
Unit of Assessment: 30 – History
Title of case study: The history of ethnic minorities and the City: promoting ethnic inclusivity
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The project's initial output was a book and website for the Institute of Historical Research's series 'England's Past for Everyone'. The UWE project, alone among the 14 comparable Heritage Lottery Funded projects, focused on ethnicity, pioneering new approaches to researching urban history, providing material accessible to museums, community and minority groups, schools and artists, and helping Bristol's reorientation towards greater ethnic inclusivity. The research informed Bristol's M-Shed Museum, a £24 million HLF/City Council project; inspired community and media projects; informed public history debates in the UK and USA; and encouraged new approaches by historians and community groups (e.g. special edition of <i>Midland History</i>, 2011).</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Lead academics: Dr Madge Dresser and Professor Peter Fleming. When this research was undertaken both of them were Principal Lecturers.</p> <p>The research mainly undertaken between 2005 and 2008 was funded by a £250,000 grant (part of a £3 million project called 'England's Past for Everyone' [EPE] financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund [HLF] and hosted by the Victoria County History Project at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London). The project aimed at making good quality local history available beyond the academy and although the bulk of the research was undertaken by academics it also involved volunteer researchers, some of whom received training in historical methods and sources.</p> <p>The initial outputs of the project were a website and a book, the latter first published in 2007 and reprinted in 2009. Additions to the website continued into 2008. The book consisted of 14 chapters, mainly by Dresser with some input by Fleming and the remainder written by invited contributors: Edson Burton, Joe Hillaby and Forward Maisokwadzo.</p> <p>Through much original research, the project established an original narrative about the experience of ethnic minorities in the city over a long time frame, bringing together established scholarship and previously unrecognised primary sources from both local and national archives. Archives consulted included The National Archives, the Bristol Record Office, Westminster Abbey Library, the British Library and the Mass Observation archives at Sussex University. The research also utilised oral interviews, family history material from around the world and material gathered from newspapers and wills by local volunteers under academic supervision. It set these local findings in their wider political and economic context and also explored how the host community experienced and perceived immigration.</p> <p>The research unearthed unexpected continuities between different immigrant groups arriving in Bristol throughout the last thousand years; it also identified certain features which enabled some groups to enjoy a greater degree of social mobility and integration than others. For example, it showed how anxieties about jobs, religion and identity were not merely products of the last two centuries but stimulated hostility to immigrants as far back as the middle ages. It demonstrated how the presence of educated and articulate members of particular incoming groups could improve their perception by the receiving society. In addition, it identified both the contributions made by members of ethnic minorities to the shaping of the city and the tensions immigration could occasion. Findings included new evidence about Icelandic slaves in medieval Bristol unearthed by way of engaging with Icelandic sources and a new tract relating the experience of an 18th century Jewish woman in Bristol found by way of correspondence with an Australian family historian. It also uncovered the previously undocumented support networks established by more recent immigrants such as those from Pakistan and India, and documented the way World Bank policies resulted in a concentration of Mirpuri taxi drivers in late twentieth century Bristol. It established too how plastic [elastic] the notion of ethnic identity could be as historical circumstances changed over time.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p>

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S1. Madge Dresser and Peter Fleming *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*, (London: Phillimore Press with Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2007, 260pp. Reprinted in 2009. ISBN 978-1-86077-477-5 – **Available through UWE.**

S2. England's Past for Everyone Website (launched and now reconfigured as VCH Explore) - <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/>

S3. Madge Dresser, 'Politics, Populism or Professionalism: reflections on the Role of the Academic Historian in the Production of Public History, *The Public Historian*, vol. 32, no. 3 (Summer 2010), pp. 39-63 (Published by: University of California Press) ISSN: 02723433 print, 15338576 online and DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/tph.2010.32.3.39>

This international journal is refereed by an international academic panel and is aimed at heritage and public history practitioners and academics interested in public history.

S4. Institute of Historical Research Reviews in History: <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/904> - **Available through UWE**

S5. <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/publications-projects/epe/bristol> - **Available through UWE**

S6. Peter Fleming, 'The Welsh Diaspora in Early Tudor English Towns' in Helen Fulton (ed.), *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012, pp. 271-93 ISBN 978-0708323519

S7. Peter Fleming, 'Identity and belonging: Irish and Welsh in Fifteenth-Century Bristol' in Linda Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VII: Conflicts, Consequences and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007, pp. 175-93. ISSN 1479-9871 – **Available through UWE**

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

Bristol: Ethnic Minorities and the City c. 1000-2001 was one of the two best-selling of the 14 volume series of England's Past for Everyone initiative. It was reprinted in 2009 and formed the basis of a number of popular outreach projects. The website also proved very popular. According to the VCH Research Manager, the Bristol part of the England's Past for Everyone website has attracted the largest number of hits of all the local history projects: an annual average from 2008 to 2012 of 90, 715. [Source 1]

The Bristol EPE project informed the content and approach of M-Shed, Bristol's £24million museum of the city's history. Dresser and Fleming were co-opted by the Bristol Museum Service to act as M-Shed's historical advisers and as convenors of the Academic Advisers Group. [Source 2]

The impact of the research and researchers on the shaping of the new Museum of Bristol [M-Shed] and on the acquisitions policy of the Bristol Record Office is formally acknowledged in their websites and documented by the Community Partnership Officer and Senior Volunteer Coordinator of the Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives Services. She has found *Bristol: Ethnic Minorities* to be 'extremely useful'. It has provided 'a great way to gain contextual information about diverse communities across time and to explore stories relating to individual people' and she recalled in particular 'researching the Irish, Jewish, African-Caribbean, Polish and Huguenot communities with the help of this book' which 'certainly helped to bring the gallery to life'. Since its opening in June 2011, the M-Shed has received more than one million visitors and it was, according to the Community Partnership Officer, 'reassuring to know that 'this book has in part enabled them to gain a better understanding of Bristol's diverse population. She has previously coordinated a partnership initiative with local African-Caribbean community groups and individuals during 2006-2008 called the Black Archives Partnership of which Dresser was a steering group member and she has confirmed that the latter's research into the African-Caribbean community in Bristol both 'fed into and was influenced by the partnership'. For the Community Partnership Officer this was 'a great example of partnership working between Universities, heritage and cultural organisations and communities and it's great that one of the legacies is this book'. [Source 3]

The project has influenced School History curricula. The EPE website included a separately funded 'Schools diversity trail' by Dean Smart of UWE based on the project. [Source 4] The book has also

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been used to develop teaching resources and has informed History teaching, for example, at Downend Secondary School in Bristol and the Trinity Centre in Bristol and provided the material for the EPE 'Bristol medieval aliens' website. [Source 5]

It has also influenced other community historical resources, such as *A Guide to African Caribbean Sources in Bristol's Museums, Art Galleries and Archives*; a South West Trades Union Congress pamphlet, *Who Makes up the South West? The Facts around the Region's Population and Migration*, and the Trinity Centre's HLF funded 'Bristol Sound Project and book. Bristol First Born Creatives, a Black-led education and media consultancy which co-opted Dresser as an adviser.[Source 6]

Dresser and Fleming have presented their research to a diverse range of audiences, including popular history and community groups and Ethnic Minorities has been positively reviewed, including in the British Association for Local History's journal, *The Local Historian* (39:1, Feb. 2009. [Source 7]. The following indicate some of the diverse audiences: Human Rights Conference at the Bristol Pierian Centre in March 2008 including asylum seekers, refugees and those working with them in an audience of 150; Bristol conference in April 2008 organised by EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators, an audience of over 200 mainly teachers and students from 15 countries; the Bristol Legacy Commission's International Inclusive Curriculum Conference

Attended by teachers, students and school pupils in July 2010; and in December 2011 the Bristol Festival of Ideas event at the Bristol Arnolfini Gallery attended by 120 members of the public, including refugees and asylum seekers. [Source 8]

Dresser and Fleming have made several radio broadcasts around ethnic minorities, including a series for BBC Radio Bristol and interviews on Salaam Shalom, a Jewish/Muslim internet radio station, later made into podcasts. They have also appeared in features on community radio stations catering for ethnic minority audiences such as UJIMa and Bristol Community FM as well as pop stations such as Heart Radio. Findings from their research have featured on BBC broadcasts. [Source 9] Finally, Bristol's 1960s bus boycott, in protest at the bus company's discrimination against non-white employees, covered in the book, has brought Dresser into the public eye. Dresser appeared on BBC's *The One Show* (May 2013) to discuss the boycott thus informing a wider debate. [Source 10]

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

Source 1: Email from Research Manager, Victoria County History Project. The England's Past for Everyone website is now reconfigured as [Link](#) - **Available through UWE.** [1 on REF portal]

Source 2: Perhaps most significantly, the Bristol EPE project informed the content and approach of M-Shed Bristol's £24million Museum of the city's history. Madge Dresser and Peter Fleming were co-opted by the Bristol Museum Service to act as M-Shed's historical advisors and as convenors of the Academic Advisory Group. [Link](#) - **Available through UWE.**

Source 3: Email from the Community Partnership Officer and Senior Volunteer Coordinator of the Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives Services, 8 July 2013. **Available through UWE.** [2]

Source 4: The EPE website included a separately funded 'School's diversity trail' by Dean Smart of UWE based on Dresser's and Fleming's research. - **Available through UWE.** [Link](#)

It also hosts the website on Bristol's medieval aliens - **Available through UWE:** [Link](#)

Source 5: Dean Smart, 'Testing Times for Bristol', EPE News, Winter, 2008 - **Available through UWE.** [Link](#)

Source 6: The research also has underpinned other historical resources:

A Guide to African Caribbean Sources in Bristol's Museums, Art Galleries and Archives - **Available through UWE** [Link](#)

A pamphlet by the South West Trades Union Congress: *Who Makes up the South West? The facts around the region's population and migration* - **Available through UWE** [Link](#)

The Trinity Centre, Bristol utilised the research in their HLF funded 'Bristol Sound Project' and their

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pamphlet on Trinity Church [Trinity Church website](#)

Bristol First Born Creatives, a black- led education and media consultancy has also utilised the EPE research and co-opted Madge Dresser as advisor. [First Born Creatives Website](#)

Source7: British Association for Local History, review of M.Dresser and P.Fleming *Bristol Ethnic Minorities and the City, 1000-2001*: [Link](#) - Available through UWE

Indy Media Centre: [Link](#) - Available through UWE

Source 8: For Clio Conference see [Link](#)

For the International Inclusive Curriculum Conference see [Link](#) – Available through UWE.

For the Ideas Festival see [Link](#) - Available through UWE.

Source 9: See, for example, Minute-by-Minute: Tracing Bristol's Roots: [Link](#) - Available through UWE.

Source 10: For the discussion on The One Show see UWE Bristol [@uwebristolnews](#) [Tweet](#)

See also [Link](#) - Available through UWE.

[Link](#) - Available through UWE.