

Institution: University of Strathclyde
Unit of Assessment: 30
Title of case study: Cultural, Creative and Economic Benefits of the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research by Dr Angela Bartie and Dr Eleanor Bell on the 1962 Edinburgh International Writers' Conference initiated a major global literary conference series in 15 countries, involving 262 writers and engaging thousands of audiences at events and online in a major debate about literature and its role in contemporary life. The 2012-13 Edinburgh World Writers' Conference was conceived after Bartie and Bell contacted the Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF) early in 2010 to propose collaborative events to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1962 Conference. This has resulted in over £700,000 in extra funding to the EIBF, the re-introduction of a multiple writer format (opening up new channels of communication amongst writers), and further underlined Scotland's status as a major player in global literary culture through its worldwide events.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Context: In August 1962, a major literary conference was held as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. The 1962 International Writers' Conference brought together around 70 writers – including Norman Mailer, Mary McCarthy, Lawrence Durrell and Khushwant Singh – from all over the world to debate key themes in literature and in broader society over five days in front of a paying audience. The 1962 Conference provided a window into the major debates of the 1960s, challenged tradition both in the arts in Scotland and more broadly, and gave a snapshot of a society seeking to make sense of rapid change. It was the first literary conference of its kind, and its format – many writers appearing together at once, in dialogue with each other and with the assembled audience – provided opportunities for open debate on major social issues, including many controversial and taboo subjects.</p> <p>Key Research Findings: Bartie came across this largely overlooked event whilst researching the cultural history of the Edinburgh Festivals [1]. She discovered that key debates that took place across the western world about the place of culture in society, the practice and significance of the arts, censorship, the role of organised religion, and meanings of morality were all reflected in 'culture wars' in Edinburgh, the Festival City [1]. The 1962 Conference was a central case study in this research, with papers highlighting its significance in the development of cultural networks in the early 1960s, as well as longer-term cultural change in Scotland [2]. Research on the 1962 Conference also led to an invited contribution to a new book exploring 20th century Scotland [3]. In 2009, Bartie met Dr Eleanor Bell (English Studies) and discovered mutual research interests in the cultural legacy of the 1960s in Scotland. Together, they began working to bring the 1962 Conference to wider public attention and to stimulate debate on cultural change in Scotland from c. 1960 to the present day. Between 2009 and 2012, Bartie and Bell pooled their existing documentation, undertook fresh archival research, and conducted oral history interviews with individuals with first-hand experience of the 1962 Conference. They uncovered a photographic archive (Alan Daiches) in the National Library of Scotland, which revealed a rich visual record of the 1962 Conference, and brought these together with their individual academic research, original transcripts from the 1962 Conference, press coverage, interviews, and written reflections that they commissioned from individuals who had attended in 1962 to create a visually appealing book aimed at a wider audience of readers [4]. Bartie and Bell demonstrated that the 1962 Conference provided an effective lens for exploring broader social, cultural and political issues in society, played an important role in the formation of cultural networks associated with the 1960s counter-culture, and helped to put the Edinburgh Festivals on the map as a significant location for cultural debate.</p> <p>Key Researchers: Dr Angela Bartie - doctoral research begun in 2002, Research Fellow at Strathclyde (2006-08; 2009-10) and Lecturer in History (2010-present) and Dr Eleanor Bell (Lecturer in English Studies, University of Strathclyde)</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1. Bartie, Angela, <i>The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-War Britain</i> (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Notes on quality: Nominated for Saltire First Book Award. It is part of the REF2 submission in UoA 30 History.

2. Bartie, Angela, 'A "Bubbling Volcano": Edinburgh, the Festivals, and a Cultural Explosion', in Karen Dubinsky et al. (eds.), *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009).

Notes on quality: This chapter was chosen against stiff competition to be part of an edited collection arising from an international conference held at Queen's University, Canada, in June 2007 (over 80 abstracts were submitted, and 40 accepted). It is part of the REF2 submission in UoA 30 History.

3. Bartie, Angela, 'Culture in the Everyday: Art and Society', in Lynn Abrams & Callum G. Brown, *Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

Notes on quality: Invited chapter to third in series of books taking fresh look at social and cultural history in Scotland. It has been favourably reviewed in peer-reviewed journals (e.g. *Twentieth Century British History*), with my chapter highlighted as providing a fresh look at Scottish culture and identity.

4. Bartie, Angela and Eleanor Bell (eds.), *The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (Glasgow: Cargo Publishing, 2012).

Notes on quality: This book aimed at the general reader was launched during a special, invited event at the Edinburgh International Book Festival 2012 and has attracted press coverage, including *Today* (BBC Radio 4) and *Scotland Tonight* (STV).

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

Process from Research to Impact: Given that the 1962 Conference helped to set in motion what became, in 1983, the Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF), Bartie and Bell had the idea of working in partnership with the EIBF to organise events to commemorate the anniversary. Both felt strongly that the 50th anniversary of this influential gathering of writers should be marked publicly and its significance brought to wider attention. Nick Barley, EIBF Director, received their proposals with enthusiasm and the first of a series of meetings took place in June 2010, during which Bartie and Bell discussed their research findings with Barley. Bartie highlighted how much the debates at the 1962 Conference provided insights into broader culture and society, emphasised its importance to the history of the arts in Scotland, and provided copies of her published outputs on the research as well as copies of original archival materials on the original 1962 Conference (including a copy of the transcript of the 1962 Conference discussions). Barley was excited by how the 1962

Conference had so effectively 'taken the pulse' of 1960s society and how crucial the format had been to its success. Bartie's publications were drawn on to shape plans for the 2012 events, and both Bartie and Bell were invited to act as academic advisers to the EIBF. An ambitious five-day series of debates that would 'conceptually echo' the original five themes of the 1962 Conference was discussed as a central strand of the 2012 EIBF, and Bartie and Bell were invited to act as 'strand curators', and to assist with shaping and contextualizing these events.

In July 2011, Barley announced that Bartie's and Bell's research had inspired an extension of the original plans, in which the five days at the EIBF in 2012 would be the beginning of a full year of events modelled on the 1962 Conference, the Edinburgh World Writers Conference, staged at the EIBF's World Alliance partner festivals around the world.

Description of the Impact:

1. Enhancements to the EIBF and the introduction of a World Writer's Conference

Bartie's and Bell's research was directly responsible for the decision by the EIBF to establish the 2012-2013 Edinburgh World Writers' Conference (EWWC), and for shaping the launch events at EIBF 2012. It framed the key themes and questions debated during EWWC, with Bartie providing information on the broader debates covered in 1962 alongside their historical significance, and provided a point of reference for assessing the role of literature today, and for reflecting upon its contemporary relevance (Sources 1, 3, 4, and 5). Without Bartie's and Bell's research, EWWC 2012-13 would not have been conceived, and without it the numerous economic and social impacts that have accrued would not have occurred. Bartie's and Bell's research also underpinned

Impact case study (REF3b)

a major bid submitted by the EIBF to the Scottish Government Expo Fund; they contributed to the application, with their work on examining the themes discussed in 1962 proving foundational for the successful application (£260k secured). As Nick Barley reflected in the application, “The themes of 1962 remain just as relevant fifty years on and so, with the words sharpened and refined for the 21st century, the sessions in 2012 will be focused on exactly the same ideas” (Nick Barley, Expo Fund Application, August 2011).

This led to a partnership between the EIBF and the British Council, which matched the funding from the Expo Fund (£266k funding plus £34k in-kind support), extending the reach and significance of the 2012-13 Edinburgh World Writers’ Conference (EWWC) to a total of 15 countries around the world, each of which were to organise a five-day debate conceptually echoing the 1962 Conference. EIBF secured £186,500 from international literary Festival partners, and the Edinburgh event was also included in the 2012 London Cultural Olympiad (Sources 1 and 2). Bartie and Bell actively worked as academic advisers throughout the conception, development, preparations and presentation of EWWC. As well as advising on the 1962 Conference to shape the content and format of the 2012-13 events, they provided both EIBF and the British Council with detailed summaries of the 1962 Conference themes and debate highlights drawn from their research, which were then used for website publicity, promotional materials, and as the centrepiece in the official 2012-13 EWWC programme distributed to all audience members (3000 copies) (Sources 1, 2, 4 and 5). EWWC 2012-13 was the central strand of EIBF 2012, and EWWC events also took place in Toronto, Berlin, Cape Town, Krasnoyarsk, Jaipur, Beijing, Congo-Brazza, Brussels, St Malo, Lisbon, Izmir, Trinidad/Tobago and Kuala Lumpur (as well as Melbourne in August 2013).

2. Influence on writers

50 writers from different parts of the world and at different stages in their careers were invited to participate in the first EWWC event in Edinburgh in August 2012. An additional 262 international writers representing 61 countries have since taken part in 13 of the events around the world, with 11 of the Scottish writers and 9 others who took part in Edinburgh also participating (Sources 1 and 2). Bartie and Bell also compiled a delegate pack for the 50 invited writers at the Edinburgh event, which was used throughout the course of the debates, with numerous references to what writers taking part in 1962 had said on the corresponding days of the original conference (Source 4); this was also used in the Cape Town delegate packs. These EWWC events have increased communication and debate between writers of many different nations and cultures (Sources 1 and 6). Crime writer Denise Mina recently blogged about the importance of EWWC 2012-13 in establishing a sense of community amongst writers and opening up channels of communication, resulting in a number of significant outcomes – including the production of a collaborative statement on writers’ rights and challenges in relation to copyright and e-book distribution (Source 8). The EWWC has (and continues to) influence how writers think and discuss their work, precisely because of the five-day multiple writer format inspired by the 1962 conference (Sources 6 and 9).

3. Influence on media and public understanding

Nick Barley refers to EWWC in the introduction to the 2012 Annual Review as ‘One of the most talked-about projects of the year’ (Source 7). EWWC has reached audiences directly at the events (5071 audience members across 8 editions of EWWC, based on available figures) and online via the live-streaming of events, blogging, tweeting and other forms of communication (33,584 visits to the website from 166 different countries in the period 1 July 2012 to 24 June 2013; Twitter hashtag #worldwritersconf had a reach of 439,698 accounts with 886,236 impressions at the highest point so far; and EWWC currently has 2123 actively engaged followers) (Source 1). The historical materials Bartie and Bell wrote for the EWWC website stimulated media interest in the original 1962 International Writers’ Conference (including articles in *The Guardian* and *TLS*). Bartie and Bell were interviewed for *The Scotsman*, BBC Scotland (web), and BBC Radio 4 *Today* (transmitted 21/08/12); Bartie also appeared live on STV *Scotland Tonight* (15/12/2012). The EWWC has received 267 media mentions around the world so far (Source 1).

4. Economic benefits

The EIBF has benefitted from the addition of the Edinburgh World Writer’s Conference, noting in its

2012 Annual Review that it attracted a 'record number of visitors' and a 3% increase in ticket sales on 2011, despite the economic downturn (Source 7). It secured £712,500 of additional funding (and £34,000 in-kind support). Five new temporary posts were created in Edinburgh – a Writers' Conference Coordinator (20-month freelance contract), Writers' Conference Editor (12 month freelance contract), Writers' Conference Assistants (6 day contract for two people), and a Social Media Consultant (5 day contract). A commission was also put out for an artist to produce a piece of work in response to EWWC. In partnership with EIBF, the British Council has helped to coordinate the 15 events around the world, employing the PR company Four Coleman Getty to undertake publicity for EWWC. Two new temporary jobs were also created at the British Council: a 9-month 0.6 FTE freelance project manager and a 9-month 0.4 FTE freelance web manager (Source 2). Furthermore, the photographic images uncovered as part of Bartie's and Bell's research were used for online and print promotion and publicity, as well as during EWWC events. Bartie and Bell were also invited and appeared on day one of EWWC alongside surviving 1962 Conference organisers, John Calder and Jim Haynes, at which they launched their book on the legacy of 1962 [4].

Overall, the EWWC has been significant in a number of ways. As a high profile partnership between EIBF and the British Council, supported by The Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, Creative Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council, and Event Scotland, it has increased awareness of the 1962 International Writers' Conference, with references to its historical significance appearing on EWWC 2012-13 related materials. Furthermore, as Barley points out, it has 'underlined Scotland's status as a major player in global literary culture' (Source 1). The centrality of EWWC 2012-13 to the partner book festivals around the world has given Edinburgh and Scotland worldwide publicity.

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

1. Joint statement from Director and the 2012-13 Edinburgh Writers' Conference Co-ordinator, Edinburgh International Book Festival.
2. 2012-13 Edinburgh Writers' Conference Coordinator, British Council can be contacted to confirm the partnership between the EIBF and the British Council.
3. Copy of Programme: *2012-13 Edinburgh World Writers' Conference at the 2012 Edinburgh International Book Festival*.
4. Copy of Delegate Pack for writers participating in 2012-13 Edinburgh Writers' Conference.
5. <http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/should-literature-be-political/ahdaf-soueif/>
(link to film of first 2012-13 EWWC event with welcoming statements the Director EIBF, and the Director of Literature, British Council)
6. <http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/category/conference-blog/>
7. Document - Edinburgh International Book Festival Annual Review 2012
8. <http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/the-future-of-the-novel/denise-mina-on-travelling-to-turkey-for-ewwc/>
9. <http://www.edinburghworldwritersconference.org/the-future-of-the-novel/kirsty-gunn-conference-postscript/>