

**Impact template (REF3a)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Greenwich</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> (UoA 30) - History</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b>          The University of Greenwich has a longstanding tradition of engagement with the public in south London and further afield, and its historians have consistently sought to build upon this and to utilise to the full the advantages of being situated in the Old Royal Naval College, at the heart of the World Heritage Site of Greenwich. This is reflected in the range of impacts achieved. Historians at Greenwich have succeeded in engaging the local community through projects such as Memories of War, utilised the England’s Past for Everyone initiative to draw the interested public into active engagement with historical research, and successfully engaged with a wide range of stakeholders. This has been complemented by active dissemination of our research through traditional and, increasingly, social media.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b>          Historians at the University of Greenwich have a well established specialism in public history, and public engagement has been central to several aspects of our research. This has followed five interlinked principles.</p> <p>Firstly, public participation has been central to several projects from the design stage to dissemination. One example is Professor Sarah Palmer and Dr Vanessa <b>Taylor</b>’s research on the governance of the River Thames, discussed in detail in the appended case study, which depended wholly on the involvement of stakeholders from the business and policy communities and other interested parties. The second is the Memories of War project (<a href="http://www.memoriesofwar.org.uk/">www.memoriesofwar.org.uk/</a>), led by Dr June Balshaw, which collected and documented the memories of people who lived through World War II in south London, with the assistance of students and local volunteers. Over 200 interviews have been conducted and transcribed, and various events for participants organised. The major impact here has been on the elderly, who have consistently reported that participation had a direct and positive effect on their quality of life, with new friendships being formed and experiences shared and discussed. Drama students have also taken scripts based upon some of the testimonies collected into care and social centres for the elderly. Local schools have also benefited from Key Stage 3-4 Teaching and Learning Resources (TLRs) downloadable from the project website. Memories of War was nominated for the Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community award in the 2012 <i>Time Higher Education Awards</i>.</p> <p>Secondly, Greenwich historians have sought to bring local non-academic historians and the interested public into active engagement with their research. The best example is the England’s Past for Everyone (EPE) project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), during which two research fellows from the University, Drs Andrew Hann and Sandra Dunster, worked in partnership with local historians in Kent and provided research training to volunteers, who in turn made a major contribution to the research effort. This resulted in two accessible but academically rigorous publications and Teaching and Learning Resources for local schools downloadable from the EPE website (<a href="http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/publications-projects/epe/kent">http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/publications-projects/epe/kent</a>). This created a cadre of trained and enthusiastic Kent-based researchers, several of whom have published articles in the Friends of Medway Archives’ quarterly journal. As discussed below, we plan to involve these researchers in future projects.</p> <p>Thirdly, we have sought to exploit the inherent impact potential of the Old Royal Naval College, especially in terms of being an ideal place to host public events. This has served to raise awareness and increase participation in existing projects, such as Memories of War, whose exhibition attracted a record 1,800 visitors. It has also facilitated the organisation of other public history events. In 2012 the history seminar series was redesigned to be explicitly public-facing, and held at times convenient for the local community. This was launched in October 2012 with a joint presentation by Dr Martin <b>Wilcox</b> and Linda Cunningham of the Greenwich History Society, attracting an array of local history groups. A community history day held on 5 October 2013, entitled ‘Greenwich Past: Paupers, Pensioners and Pageants,’ attracted more than 50 people,</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

most not previously involved with the University. Three members of HRAG, Drs Dunster, **Hanna** and **Wilcox**, presented papers based on new research focused on subjects relating to the Old Royal Naval College.

Fourthly, we have maintained longstanding and often highly productive relationships with a variety of stakeholders and outside organisations. These were clearly crucial to the success of England's Past for Everyone and Memories of War. The latter project was backed by the Firepower Royal Artillery Museum, Charlton Athletic FC and the London Boroughs of Bexley, Greenwich and Southwark. Several Greenwich historians have worked in collaboration with Greenwich Hospital and the Greenwich Foundation, which manages the Old Royal Naval College site. Also within the World Heritage Site, Greenwich Maritime Institute and the National Maritime Museum have had a Memorandum of Understanding since 2001. The Museum collaborated in the funding bid for the Sustaining the Empire project, and continues to maintain a virtual exhibition of the project's findings on its website (<http://www.rmg.co.uk/researchers/research-areas-and-projects/sustaining-the-empire/>). One final example is the Centre for the Study of Play and Recreation, a cluster of researchers led by Dr Mary Clare **Martin**, which maintains relationships with several historical societies and museums interested in the broad theme of play and childhood. Its Multicultural Toys exhibition at Greenwich in June 2013 was attended by academics, play workers, toy retailers and local history groups. Other events organised by the centre have focused on bringing together academics and practitioners.

Finally, we have sought to disseminate our work and raise our general profile through the media. To give a few examples, Drs Dunster, Balshaw and Chris **Ware** have all appeared on the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?*, whilst Drs **Ware** and **Wilcox** feature in the upcoming series of *Heir Hunters*. Professor Chris Bellamy is regularly consulted as an expert on geopolitical and security issues on Sky News, Al-Jazeera and the BBC. Increasingly, however, the focus is turning to social media. Greenwich Maritime Institute's blog and twitter feed went live in 2012, and Dr **Taylor's** research on the Thames is publicised partly through a Twitter feed (@ThamesGov), which at the time of writing has 340 followers, including numerous conservation and environmental groups and governmental organisations such as the Environment Agency, and is growing quickly. Many of these groups sent representatives to the *Running the River: How the Past Informs the Present* conference at Greenwich in July 2013.

**c. Strategy and plans**

Our future strategy for impact involves building upon our existing strength in public history and longstanding commitment to community engagement, and also learning from highly successful projects such as Memories of War to design impact into research projects from the outset, identifying key potential beneficiaries and setting out clear plans for reaching them.

The first focus will be on the local community, seeking to build on previous successes, to enhance quality of life and to draw increasing numbers of people into active engagement with the past, and with our research. This will be achieved in two ways. The immediate priority is to build on the momentum that has been built up over the past year through the seminar series and Greenwich Past event, to cement the university's position in the local history community and establish a core of regular participants in public events to serve as a foundation for future expansion. Some of these we hope to draw into active participation in the research effort. Drs **Wilcox**, **Ware** and Dunster are currently working up a bid for funding for a project on the convict hulks of the Thames and Medway, which is designed to build on the success of England's Past for Everyone by utilising and expanding the core of trained researchers developed then, and involving them in the research effort. Dr **Hanna**, as part of a consortium of historians from the universities of South East England, successfully bid for an AHRC grant of £500,000 to establish a Coordinating Centre for Community Research and Engagement to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War. This will be one of five hubs which, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, will build a dialogue between academic and public historical research, and assist communities in exploring their heritage via community projects. Based at the University of Kent, this Centre will act as a coordination point for all commemorative activities in the south east region for an initial three years from January 2014. Dr **Hanna** has also been invited to work with the British Council to develop educational resources

## Impact template (REF3a)

about the First World War for use in schools from 2014, and she continues to speak to a number of organisations including the Sea Cadets and the Western Front Association.

Outside the local area, the university's position in the Old Royal Naval College offers unparalleled potential for reaching visitors to the site, enhancing their experience and supporting the work of organisations which cater for them, such as the National Maritime Museum and Greenwich Foundation. This will require us to strategise our relationships with them to a greater degree than has been the case so far, and to involve them more closely in the design and planning of research projects. We are, however, already moving in this direction. The National Maritime Museum, for example, provided a statement of support for Dr **Hanna's** successful bid to the AHRC. One upcoming task for the History Research Activity Group is to meet and discuss how this can best be achieved. Meanwhile, Dr **Wilcox** is in discussion with Greenwich Foundation about how best to utilise the results of his recently-published research on the early history of Greenwich Hospital to inform tours of the site and written material on the website and in the visitor centre, and in talks to visitors and the local community.

Some Greenwich historians' research has direct implications for present-day policymakers and sectors of the business community. This is perhaps especially the case with Dr **Taylor's** work on the Thames, and environmental history more generally, and Dr **Wilcox's** research on modern fisheries history. As the appended case study details, stakeholder engagement has been central to the Thames Governance project, and HRAG will study the lessons to be learned from this and seek to apply them to projects with stakeholder engagement potential in future. Greenwich Maritime Institute already has strong links to the business and policymaking fraternity of 'Maritime London,' and increasingly in China through the China Maritime Centre, launched in July 2012. These we will seek to develop and deepen through greater participation in project planning and the research agenda in the coming years.

To achieve all of this, institutional measures and mechanisms to maximise impact are already being developed. 'Impact Champions' have been appointed for several disciplines across the university, and tasked with focusing on the impact potential of current and upcoming projects and drawing researchers' attention to how this can be maximised. Dr **Taylor** has taken this role on for history. HRAG will place impact at the heart of its agenda, and increase the proportion of its time devoted to discussing public engagement and developing relationships with stakeholders. Finally, a more systematic and strategic approach to dissemination will be adopted, starting with the creation of a focused and achievable strategy for using social media to a greater extent than hitherto.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The two appended impact case studies demonstrate diverse but complementary aspects of Greenwich historians' commitment to public and stakeholder engagement. Both projects involved close cooperation with organisations outside the university, and both achieved positive impacts upon participants.

The first case study is Dr Andrew **Dawson's** research on, and contribution to, the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU) History Project. This initiative, run by the union, was in a slow process of long-term decline. Dr **Dawson's** research stimulated a lively debate and led directly to the introduction of measures to revitalise the project via the infusion of new members and an attempt to tap new sources of funding.

The second case study is Professor Sarah Palmer and Dr Vanessa **Taylor's** work on the governance of the River Thames. Conducted through two internally funded and one AHRC funded projects, it has depended at all stages upon the involvement and participation of a wide variety of stakeholders. In turn it has impacted positively upon many of them, providing a forum for communication between interested parties, contributing to professional development and leading to Dr **Taylor** being commissioned by the Port of London Authority to act as an expert witness in an ongoing court case.