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| Institution: Leeds Trinity University |
| Unit of Assessment: History |
| Title of case study: Public understanding and appreciation of the Victorian era |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research produced within the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (LCVS) has led to, through numerous public engagement activities, an impact on public understanding and appreciation of the Victorian era. The research on which this is founded relates to two members of the UOA, who particularly focus on Victorian identities, history and historical cultures in Britain and the British Empire. They have each engaged the public through public lectures at local museums and history groups, publishing their work in an accessible format and media appearances. Links have also been established with local museums that particularly focus on this period of history, enabling museum staff to promote their collections.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Leeds Trinity has an international reputation for research in the area of Victorian Studies. The Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (LCVS) is a flagship interdisciplinary research centre based at Leeds Trinity with close links to the British Association for Victorian Studies and University of Cergy-Pontoise, Paris. Several staff members in the History unit work within this research centre. The key researchers within this case study are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Dr Rosemary Mitchell: Lecturer (1999-), Deputy Director LCVS (2000-2007), Acting Director LCVS (2008-2010), Director LCVS (2010-). ii) Dr Di Drummond: Lecturer (1995-2010), Reader in Modern History (2010-). <p>Dr Rosemary Mitchell is recognised internationally for research on Victorian historical cultures – the ways in which the Victorians engaged with and represented the past to explore contemporary dilemmas and shape their own identities. Her approach is interdisciplinary: primary sources include historical novels, history books, periodical reviews, history textbooks, historical genre paintings, postcards, illustrations to magazines, newspapers, architecture, and material artefacts. Mitchell argues that knowledge of how the Victorians manipulated the past helps us to understand (and critique) the ways in which we ourselves appropriate the past to our own agendas. She is currently focusing on how the Victorians used history to negotiate gender identities and to shape domestic ideals: the published case-study on John Everett Millais’s painting, <i>Sir Isumbras at the Ford</i> (1857) relates to this project. She is also interested in how Victorian women writers represent the past in their texts, and has focused specifically on the work of Henrietta Marshall and C.M. Yonge, considering issues of national identity and narrative. Her research ensures that she is particularly interested in how the Victorians themselves are represented in contemporary contexts, including the heritage industry.</p> <p>Dr Di Drummond’s research focuses on railways in the British Empire. More specifically, Drummond has conducted a study of how the British government, Government of India, railway engineers and commercial enterprises (including investors) produced a vision that considered the construction of railways in India and, later certain regions of Africa, essential to bringing progress and ‘civilisation’ to the peoples of these areas. This is monitored through examination of official government publications, writings by the promoters of railways and periodicals. Responses to this by indigenous peoples, while difficult to monitor, are considered either through reportage of how their lives were changed by the railway, or, in the case of India, the writings of Indian nationalist politicians, including those based in Britain. Her work has also focused on trade unionism in British railway company workshops, illustrating how, during the period 1840 – 1914, trade unionism underwent a great deal of development. Drummond has demonstrated how employees in these workshops used a range of different strategies, including those relating to the regulation of apprenticeship and the job market, in an attempt to counter railway company management repression. Her most current study explores the commentary and opinions presented by British</p> |

civil engineers working on the construction of some of France's earliest railway lines on the character and capacities of various European 'races' employed as navvies.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Mitchell, R. 'Old Boars and Time-Worn Cloisters: Attacks on Early Victorian Historical Discourses and Heritage Tourism in R.H. Barham's *The Ingoldsby Legends*', *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History, and the Philosophy of History*, 40/3 (Summer, 2011), 331-354. (REF2 entry).
- Mitchell, R. 'Sir Isumbras at the Ford: A Portrait of the Young Artist Becoming an Old Knight', in H. Ellis and J. Meyer, eds., *Masculinity and the Other: Historical Perspectives* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 304-327. (REF2 entry).
- Mitchell, R. 'Healing the Wounds of War: (A)mending the National Narrative in the Historical Publications of Charlotte M. Yonge', *Women's History Review* 20/5 (Nov., 2011), 785-808 (REF2 entry).
- Drummond, D. 'British Imperial Narratives of progress through rail transportation and indigenous peoples' responses in India and Africa, 1850-1939', *Zeitschrift fur Weltgeschichte: Interdisziplinare Perspektiven*, (München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2011), pp. 107 – 140. (REF2 entry).
- Drummond, D. 'British Railwaymen in France: The (In)comprehensions of British Railway Builders on France's early lines', in R. Mitchell (ed.) *Mutual (In)Comprehensions: France and Britain in the long nineteenth century* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). (REF2 entry).
- Drummond, D. 'Collective Trade Union action and repression in British Railway Company Workshops, 1840-1914', in M. Munoz Rubio (ed.) *Organizacions obreras y represion en el ferrocarril: una perspectiva internacional*, (Madrid: Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, 2011), pp. 51 – 75. (REF2 entry).

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

The body of research detailed above has contributed towards, through public talks, media appearances and publishing in accessible formats, a better informed public on the Victorian era, particularly regarding the powerful stories told by historic buildings, landscapes and collections. Collectively they have engaged with an estimated 640 members of the public (through public talks at local museums and to local history groups) and potentially up to 20,000 people who have accessed research published in an accessible format (including readability).

During the REF assessment period, Drummond and Mitchell undertook a pilot collaboration with Abbey House Museum (Leeds). Abbey House Museum is an interactive museum with recreated Victorian Streets and a history of childhood gallery. Through this thematic link with 'childhood', two of the museum's staff became involved in the 'Victorian Childhoods' colloquium (held at Leeds Trinity on 20th March 2010). This interdisciplinary colloquium sought to achieve a rounded understanding of childhood and constructions of childhood in Victorian Britain. The curator of social history and the educational officer at Abbey House each presented a reflection on the interpretation of childhood to children at the museum. Feedback from the museum staff shows that this involvement was of great benefit to them by providing an opportunity, within an academic framework, to show how history can be communicated through museum displays and object-focused learning (email communication). One of the curators at Abbey House has since been involved with a further event held at Leeds Trinity, the Yorkshire Women's History Network conference (a network for independent researchers and members of the public, as well as academics and those involved in the heritage sector). At the inaugural conference 'Women and the Other' (25th June 2011), which focused on gendered and raced identities in the nineteenth century, the curator brought a series of artefacts and papers from the museum on women in Yorkshire and

Women's Suffrage from the Leonora Cohen collection, to portray the compelling story of the Leeds suffragette. This enabled the museum to promote their less well known archive on the suffragette, encouraging greater use of this collection (email communication).

This partnership with the museum has been strengthened with reciprocal talks being given by both Drummond and Mitchell to the 'Wednesday club', a group formed of members of the public who meet at the museum to hear papers on diverse historical topics. Drawing on their research in the Empire and indigenous people's responses, Victorian identities and Victorian historical cultures, Drummond and Mitchell have used their expertise and shared their knowledge with public audiences. Influencing and enriching peoples' knowledge of the period they have given talks on 'The Art of George Bernard O'Neill' (Mitchell, June 2010), 'Leeds Railway Engineering works and their experts' (Drummond, June 2011), and 'Leeds Suffragettes' (Drummond, March 2011). A particular feature of this latter presentation was the inclusion of a role play of the court indictment of Leonora Cohen, after which artefacts from the museum's Leonora Cohen collection were examined. Audience figures for each of these talks were around 25.

At a national level, Drummond has been giving popular talks to various Family History and Local History Societies and to museums since 2001. Through these she has facilitated public engagement with the processes of historical enquiry by enabling their access to evidence, and discussion of hidden and family histories. More recent talks have included 'Railway Ancestors' to the Yorkshire Archaeological Society (22nd September 2012, audience approx. 35), 'Women in a man's Town – The Women of Crewe, 1843-1914' to the Cheshire Local History Association (27th October 2012, audience approx. 300) and a similarly themed talk to the Crewe Local and Family History Society, (25th March 2013, audience approx. 40). In the REF assessment period, it is estimated that Drummond engaged an estimated 570 members of the public through these public lectures. Forthcoming talks by Drummond include 'Railways Change Lives: Using The National Archives and National Railway Museum Collections for researching the social impact of railways' to be given at both the National Archives in Kew and the National Railway Museum at York in September 2013.

A similar partnership to that with Abbey House has been developed with the Mercer Art Gallery (Harrogate). After delivering a public lecture in 2007 on 'Social Realism in Dickens and Frith' as part of a programme of activities for the 'Painting the Victorian Age: W.P. Frith' exhibition (Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, and Guildhall Art Gallery, London), Mitchell initiated the organisation of a collaborative day colloquium (May 2011), open to and attended by the public. This coincided with the Gallery's hosting of the first major exhibition of Grimshaw's work for a generation. An unpublished biography written by his descendants has been unearthed, revealing a sharp sense of humour, a love of art and a fierce dedication to his family. There are photographs, sketchbooks, letters and personal effects, creating stories that turn the paintings from fairy tales into history. The colloquium was an interdisciplinary event, co-ordinated by Dr Nathan Uglov (Associate Principal Lecturer in English, Leeds Trinity University). It featured speakers from those who contributed to the catalogue and members of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (including Mitchell), as well as creative contributions by practising artists, curators and poets. In total 27 people attended. Feedback from members of the public (including a member of Grimshaw's family) after the event expressed appreciation that the event had taken place. As a result of this link with the Mercer Art Gallery, Mitchell has recently been invited to contribute an essay to a catalogue for a forthcoming major exhibition at the Guildhall Art Gallery in London.

To further aid public engagement with their research, Drummond has communicated her research outcomes in accessible formats. This idea of 'accessibility' has included writing in a manner that is readable for a public audience as well as publishing in formats that are physically accessible to the public. Related to her research on railway workers in Britain and her Empire, Drummond has published in the BBC magazine *Who Do You Think You Are?* (see Drummond, D. 'Focus on Railway Workers', April 2010), which in 2010 had a readership circulation of 20,407 in the UK and

1,966 overseas. Drummond has continued to further engage interested public in discovering their railway ancestors through her accessible book *Tracing Your Railway Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians*, (Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley: 2010). This book guides people through discovering their own family histories so that they can enjoy the past by immersing themselves in their own stories. This was reviewed in the US based publication *Federation of Genealogical Societies Forum* (Spring 2011) as a book that 'puts the problem in perspective, provides excellent guidance on how to do research, and illustrates well what can be found on the companies and their workers' (Paul Milner). Similar favourable reviews were given in UK based publications with the book described as 'a thorough and sympathetic guide to the complexities of both railway staff records and railway history' (Dr Jill Murdoch, *Who Do You Think You Are?* May 2010), and 'an invaluable tool to tracing one's ancestor, but also provides advice on putting this information into context and learning more about the way he worked and lived' (Jonathan Wright, *Your Family History*, June 2010). Pen and Sword Books are specialists in military history and have expanded into transport, meaning that Drummond's accessible work is particularly suited to them. The publishers have stated that the book is part of a 'particularly successful series' and sold in line with their expectations.

Mitchell, meanwhile, has written several online articles about nineteenth-century historical fiction (on Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, 1819, and the historical romances of William Harrison Ainsworth) for the US online blog, *Open Letters Monthly: An Arts and Literature Review*. The review is widely read, and posted responses (August 2011 and August 2012) and recommendations show the impact of these pieces on public understanding of the nineteenth-century historical novel. The first of the two pieces provoked a dialogue about the impact of *Ivanhoe* and the dangerous idealisation of chivalry and war in America with a Vietnam war veteran and member of Veterans for Peace (email communication February 2013).

Mitchell and Drummond have also appeared in the media discussing their research. Discussing women and the railways, Drummond was interviewed on Michael Portillo's *Great British Railway Journeys* (episode 13), broadcast on BBC2 during January 2010. The first broadcast of this show attracted 2.88 million viewers, with a second broadcast attracting 1.7 million. Similarly, Mitchell in 2009 appeared on *The One Show* (BBC1) being interviewed by Dan Snow (in 2009) on the topic of the significance and evolution of Victorian beards, which related to her research on gender roles and identities. Average viewing figures for this programme are 4.4 million. This interview was filmed at Abbey House, providing added exposure for the museum. She has also spoken on BBC Radio Leeds (April 2011), discussing St George on St George's Day, particularly referencing artistic representations of the saint, and BBC Radio Teesside (Feb 2013), discussing Victorian child poverty in response to the publication of a report by End Child Poverty that analysed the effects of the 2013 Budget.

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

- Email communication from Kitty Ross, Abbey House Museum, Leeds.
- Email communication from Nicola Pullan, Abbey House Museum, Leeds.
- Lesley Smetham, Family History Society of Cheshire.
- Email communication Pen and Sword Publishers (July 2013).
- Public comments on Mitchell's *Open Letters Monthly: An Arts and Literature Review* articles available at: <http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/glory-maiden-glory-the-uncomfortable-chivalry-of-walter-scotts-ivanhoe/> and <http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/what-a-brain-must-mine-be-the-strange-historical-romances-of-william-harrison-ainsworth/>.
- Email communication with member of public regarding Mitchell's *Open Letters Monthly* article on Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (February 2013).