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<p>Institution: University of the West of England, Bristol</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 – History</p>
<p>a. Context</p>
<p>UWE Historians have sought to engage with the wider community since at least the mid-1990s when Dr Madge Dresser through her research into slavery [first impact case study] was commissioned by the City of Bristol Museum to develop public materials and a series of staged exhibitions detailing Bristol’s involvement in the slave trade. This collaboration culminated in the production of the Bristol slavery trail and the major 1999 ‘A Respectable Trade?’ Exhibition on Bristol and Atlantic slavery; at the time the most popular exhibition in the Museum’s history with 60,000 visitors over a six month period. From this initiative, a long term relationship was established with Dresser and Professor Peter Fleming playing an active role in the planning for the new museum of Bristol, renamed the M-Shed. This developing interest in and commitment towards a more active public engagement in the South West region was strengthened considerably in January 2004 when the University signed a five year agreement with Wiltshire County Council, renewed in 2009, on behalf of Wiltshire’s local authorities, and the University of London, and became a stakeholder in the Victoria County History (VCH) Wiltshire. Dresser and Fleming participated in the £3 million VCH Heritage Lottery Funded project ‘England’s Past for Everyone’ [2005-7] and led a £250,000 project on Bristol within that remit [2nd impact case study]. In addition, the Regional History Centre (RHC) at UWE has played an increasingly active role in using its scholarly expertise to develop and lead a public history partnership strategy. Current and former staff members, including the Director, Professor Steve Poole, Dresser, Fleming, Dr James Lee, Dr Peter Wardley, Professor June Hannam, Dr Moira Martin, Dr Raingard Esser and Dr Kath Holden have maintained strong links with a number of non-HEI partners, including M-Shed, the National Trust, the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, the Bristol Trinity Centre, the Holburne Museum, Bath, the Kingswood Heritage Museum Trust, the Bristol Somali Community, the St James Priory project, Bristol Radical History Group, Avon Local History Association, South West TUC and the Bristol Festival of Ideas. The Centre has almost 200 subscribing associate members, mainly non-academics from the region who receive copies of the twice yearly published journal, <i>The Regional Historian</i> (circulation 350), and participate in RHC public seminars and conferences.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p>
<p>The key mechanism to achieve impact has been through the work of the RHC which is well supported by the University through the provision of considerable teaching relief for the Director and also continuing financial support. It plays a prominent role on the advisory boards of regional knowledge exchange providers, through which specially close relationships have been established with M-Shed, the Bristol Records Society, the Victoria County History for Wiltshire, The Royal West of England Academy and the Holburne Museum, Bath. For example, the Centre has acted as paid consultant in the arrangement and content of M-Shed’s collections and displays and in the training of museum staff as providers of ‘public history’, organised public roundtable events on curatorial issues, and assisted in the creation of an M-Shed smartphone app. The Centre’s approach to these relationships is designed to promote the joint ownership of initiatives. For example, the Centre has formed a partnership with Redcliffe Press to produce a series of RHC/UWE branded books, ‘Studies in Regional History’, the first of which, <i>A City Built upon the Water: Bristol 1750-1900</i> (ed. Poole) was published in March 2013 with a second, <i>Women and the City</i> (ed. Dresser) scheduled for Spring 2014. These have a wide circulation with a broad reading public. The Centre runs its public seminar and conference programme from M-Shed to facilitate and also run jointly owned workshops with the National Trust, the South West TUC, the Bristol Somali community and the Trinity Centre in Bristol for oral history sessions. Much of this outreach work has been directed at empowering and training non-HEI partners to engage in their own historical research and in the recording of public memory. The Centre’s partnership with the South West TUC, for example, has developed from an initial approach from the General Secretary for assistance in preserving and interpreting historic Trades Union records, into a training project in which RHC staff ran workshops for volunteers on ways of researching histories of the workplace. From this the White Horse (Wiltshire) Trades Council developed a research group, organised a small conference and published <i>Wiltshire Industrial Industry: Working Class Episodes</i>, featuring a mix of essays by established academics and Trades Council volunteers.</p> <p>From an initial project (Ghosts in the Garden) funded through REACT (Research and Enterprise</p>

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in Arts and Creative Technology) and HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund), a creative economy business partnership has been formed with Splash and Ripple Ltd, the impact of which has been further work commissioned by the National Trust (NT) at Bodiam Castle in Sussex and approaches made by three further NT properties and Historic Royal Palaces. Further impact is demonstrated by invited appearances to showcase the work at two NT conferences, two Visit Wales seminars, a Universities South West event (Bristol, November 2013), a Cambridge University conference on digital heritage 'beyond the guidebook' (November 2013) and to students at the Universities of Groningen (Netherlands) and Huddersfield (October and November 2013). *Ghosts in the Garden* ran commercially at Sydney Gardens, Bath, throughout the summer of 2013 in partnership with the Holburne Museum. The project has been featured as a case study on the AHRC webpages and is included in a new edition of the *Pervasive Media Cookbook* (Watershed, Bristol, 2013). Arising from this work, **Poole** is now a proposed Co-Investigator on a major funding application to AHRC for a collaborative project on the public impact of pervasive media, 'Designing Hopeful Worlds'. **Poole's** research on the landscape history of the Severn estuary is being used by the educational charity, The Bristol Initiative Trust, whose project, 'The Learning Ships', places young people from low achievement communities with volunteer academics and students to highlight issues of heritage and environmental impact in tidal areas.

Historians who are part of the RHC team have also worked independently with the wider public. **Dresser** has advised English Heritage on Slavery and the British Country House, which resulted in a major public conference in 2009 bringing together community history groups, curators and heritage professionals alongside academics. As a result of her research, she has been asked to vet policy documents for Bristol City Council's multi-faith forum, contribute programmes to Salaam Shalom, a Jewish-Muslim internet radio station, and to participate in policy discussions at the Pierian Centre with groups representing asylum seekers and human rights groups on ending slavery. She also sits on the Council of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, **Lee** edited both the Society's journal and the Wiltshire Record Society journal and **Fleming** is a council member of the Somerset Records Society.

Those Historians not directly connected with the RHC have sought individually to widen interest in their research beyond the academic community among current and former policy makers in government and non-government organisations. In 2009, for example, Dr Effie Pedaliu presented a paper at a conference hosted by the Office of the Historian of the Department of State which brought together an international audience of policy makers, lobbyists, politicians, diplomats, Vietnam war veterans and scholars, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Also in 2009, **Dr John Fisher** presented a lecture based on his research for his book, *Gentlemen Spies in Asia*, to the Royal Society for Asian Affairs. The Society is a membership organisation with members drawn from the world of government, business, education, publishing, the military, journalism and the arts. **Professor Glyn Stone** participated in a seminar on 'Whitehall and the Slave Trade' hosted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and attended by academics, former and serving diplomats and representatives of the media and other interested institutions. His contribution subsequently appeared as an essay in a collection edited by two senior members of the FCO Historians Team with a foreword by Foreign Secretary David Miliband. He also participated in a debate as a key speaker on Appeasement before a public audience of 800 at the Royal Geographical Society in June 2013. **Dr Kent Fedorowich** participated in two workshops in London (2008) and Canberra (2009) to mark the centenary of the Australian High Commission in London. The participants included academics and former High Commissioners. The subsequent book, including his contribution, was presented to HM the Queen in 2010. Moreover, while co-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* on the High Commissioners in 2012 he and his co-editor worked closely with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He is currently working with the broadcast journalists from BBC Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Bristol on a project 'World War One at Home' which is one of the BBC's flagship projects for the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Indeed, UWE, in partnership with the AHRC and BBC, has been pivotal to this pilot project for a national scheme which was rolled out in the summer of 2013 in the eleven remaining BBC regions in England (and later the three Celtic nations in January 2014). **Dr Philip Ollerenshaw** delivered the keynote address at a public conference in Belfast in November 2013 organised by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to mark the publication of his book *Northern Ireland in the Second World War: Politics, Economic Mobilisation and Society, 1939-1945*. **Dr**

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Michael Woodiwiss on the basis of his recent research posted his 'opinion piece' on the 'British FBI' on the Organised Crime Virtual Research Network, an internet forum set up by the Home Office to create dialogue between academia and government.

c. Strategy and plans

The RHC will build on its regional collaboration and partnership strategy and plan conferences and seminars targeting non-academic participation and joint-organisation and also invite contributions for *The Regional Historian* from a wider pool of contributors. The 2012 and 2013 annual conferences, for example, were jointly organised and hosted by M-Shed and the Bristol Festival of Ideas. Papers and essays from non-HEI partners were actively solicited alongside those of academics. The Historians also participated in the NCCPE conference held in Bristol in December 2012, running a half day workshop with **Dresser** delivering the keynote address. The Centre's success in attracting significant funding from the National Trust to develop interpretative digital media in heritage landscapes marks another very important development in this area and it is expected that this work will expand during the next few years. The commitment of UWE Historians to supporting the work of the Bristol museums is important and ongoing.

Those Historians, not directly connected with the RHC, continue to take their research beyond the confines of academe. For example, **Fisher** and Pedaliu are collaborating with a member of the Historians' team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to produce a two volume edited collection on 'The Foreign Office, Foreign Policy and Commerce during the Twentieth Century', to hold two symposia in 2014 and 2015 at which the contributions will be presented along with individuals from a range of backgrounds, among them business, banking and government. Also, as seen above, **Fedorowich**, an Imperial Historian, is playing an important role with regard to the BBC's planned commemoration of the First World War. UWE is fully committed to participating in the AHRC/HLF designated West of England Co-ordinating Centre for Community Research and Engagement to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War.

This commitment of Historians to achieving impact through research and public engagement is consistent with the University's research strategy with impact at the forefront. UWE's commitment is demonstrated by its co-hosting, with Bristol University, of the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement [NCCPE], established in 2008 and funded by RCUK, HEFCE and the Wellcome Trust 'to help inspire and support universities to engage with the public'. The declared aim of the strategy is 'to enhance [UWE's] reputation for excellent research that has a positive impact on the economy and society'. In this connection, the Research and Business Innovation Unit [RBI] works closely with researchers across the University to help identify how best to involve users and beneficiaries in projects from the outset as a means of facilitating co-production and catalysing impact. Moreover, in selecting future research projects, along with other colleagues in the Humanities, the Historians will pay attention to the need to reach and influence potential users and beneficiaries. Training is in place to enable staff and research students to identify such recipients of their research and to capture and evaluate evidence of the benefits to them. It is recognised that making research readily accessible requires more extensive use of virtual repositories, blogs, and virtual networking via social media as well as using more traditional forms.

d. Relationship to case studies

The first case study is based on research into the cultural and social impact of the slave trade within Britain, exemplifying the unit's strong interest in this area, beginning with *Slavery Obscured*. The research for this book was conducted along with consultancy work commissioned by the City of Bristol Museum, which reassessed the way slavery was presented to the public. **Dresser's** research has generated much interest amongst museums, public history bodies, broadcast networks (including The National Archives and Parliament), schools and community history groups.

The second case study also provides an example of how UWE Historians have achieved wider impact for their research sphere. Papers and lectures on Bristol Ethnic Minorities presented by **Dresser, Fleming** and others at academic conferences in the UK and in the United States and also at societies as diverse as the Huguenot Society in London, the London Welsh Family Society, the Malcolm X Centre and the Jewish Historical Society in London as well as at the Bristol museums, have validated the approach. The research has supported the work of community outreach workers for intercultural projects and provided the basis for related schools' materials and profoundly influenced the content design plans of the M-Shed before and after its opening in the summer of 2011.