

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
Unit of Assessment: 28 (History)		
Title of case study: Martin Luther King in Newcastle: Improved Understanding and Engagement with the Commemoration of Regional Diversity, BAME History, and Social Justice Traditions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 – 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Brian Ward	Professor in American Studies	08.01.2012 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01.03.2015 – 2018		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>In 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. received an Honorary Doctorate from Newcastle University where he delivered a powerful impromptu speech concerning the global civil-rights struggle. This event and King's words were lost to public memory for decades until Professor Brian Ward's archival research enabled the episode, and the speech, to inform urgent contemporary debates about social inclusion, national/regional identity, and immigration. The research became the foundation for Freedom City 2017, a major commemorative festival that brought together 100,000 people across Tyneside and improved public awareness of the region's cultural heritage. The research directly informed the work of organisations: it enabled Journey to Justice to expand from a Newcastle-based pilot to social justice projects in UK 14 cities with approximately 170,000 people visiting its exhibition and educational events; and Northern Roots (creative arts charity) secured over GBP1,000,000 in funding to support their outreach work with displaced communities.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>In recent decades, the 1967 visit of Martin Luther King Jr. to Tyneside had largely disappeared from popular memory. This was symptomatic of a lack of public awareness about the deep, longstanding, and meaningful links between the African American freedom struggle and progressive politics in the North East of England. There was also little public awareness of the long history of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity of the region within which those links were forged. Ward's multifaceted body of scholarship, which includes histories of anti-slavery activism, migration, and transatlantic musical cultures, provides a corrective to this historical amnesia. It establishes the historical links between Britain, the US South, and the African American freedom struggle, placing popular understandings of the US South and its racial dynamics in transatlantic frameworks [R1, R2].</p> <p>Ward's 2017 monograph builds on this work by providing the definitive history of King's 1967 Tyneside visit in two respects [R3]. First, by drawing on extensive transatlantic archival research, the monograph reconstructs the politics of the visit itself, examining Newcastle University's decision to invite King, his acceptance, the visit itself, and the visit's wider reception. The monograph, and its subsequent impact, are underpinned by Ward's discovery of unknown footage of King's impromptu speech (British Film Institute), which restored to the public record a lost element of King's oratorical legacy. By '<i>illustrating the broader international dynamics of the civil rights struggle</i>' (review by <i>Journal of American History</i>, 105, 2019), the research placed understanding of King in a wholly new setting, '<i>employ[ing] a global perspective to illuminate the African American freedom struggle</i>' (review by <i>Immigrants & Minorities</i>, 36, 2018). Second,</p>		

Ward contextualised King's visit in terms of the complex history of racial, ethnic, and religious relations in North East England since the eighteenth century. By giving voice to hitherto marginalised historical figures, this monograph is an act of historical recovery.

Praised as '*the most detailed historical account of race relations in the North East yet written*' (review in *North East History*, 49, 2018), it closely documents the complexity of the racial and ethnic relations in the North East, and neither romanticises Geordie tolerance nor sensationalises white working-class racism. Instead, the historical significance of the North East as a site of global migrations and interactions is carefully delineated, and its largely unacknowledged connections to the African American freedom struggle are established, not least through analysis of visits by prominent black activists, including Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and Muhammad Ali.

Ward's research played a formative role in securing Arts Council funding (GBP595,000) and a US Embassy grant (GBP30,000) to support Freedom City 2017 (FC2017), and it formed the cornerstone for this city-wide cultural festival commemorating the 50th anniversary of King's visit. As a member of the FC2017 Steering Committee, Ward provided expert guidance to the strategic partners, including *Newcastle Gateshead Initiative* (NGI), a municipal partnership supported by *Gateshead Council*; *Newcastle City Council*; over 170 private sector organisations; and *Northern Roots* (NR), a major creative arts charity that works with schools, refugees and displaced communities through outreach projects focussed on roots music. Ward's involvement with the latter, drew upon his body of work on the role music played in campaigns for social justice and racial tolerance and includes research on the influence of the US freedom struggle on the career of Eric Burdon, the Newcastle-born singer with The Animals, the successful 1960s pop group [R4, R5].

Ward's research links the neglected history of diversity in North East England to transnational traditions of progressive social activism, and re-frames understanding of North East/British heritage within a previously undervalued transnational and multicultural context.

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

R1. Brian Ward (2014) 'Music, Musical Theater and the Imagined South in Interwar Britain' *Journal of Southern History*, **LXXX** (1): 39-72. Available on request.

R2. Brian Ward 'Caryl Phillips, David Armitage, and the Place of the American South in the Atlantic and Other Worlds' in Brian Ward, Martyn Bone and William A. Link (eds), *The American South and the Atlantic World* (co-edited with Martyn Bone and William A. Link) 8-44 (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, **2013**)
<http://doi.org/10.5744/florida/9780813044378.003.0002>

R3. Brian Ward *Martin Luther King in Newcastle: The African American Freedom Struggle and Race Relations in the North East of England* (Newcastle: Tyne Bridge Publishing, **2017**). Available on request.

R4. Brian Ward (2015) 'Sounds and Silences: Music and the March on Washington' *German Historical Institute Bulletin* **11**: 25-48. Available on request.

R5. Brian Ward 'That White Man, Burdon: The Animals, Race and the American South' in Jill Terry and Neil A. Wynn (eds) *Transatlantic Roots Music: Folk, Blues and National Identities* 153-178 (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, **2012**).
<http://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781617032882.003.0009>

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

In re-assessing the deep-rooted connections between North East England and the African American freedom struggle, Ward's research improved understanding of an overlooked, yet

integral feature of the region's cultural heritage and informed urgent contemporary debates about social inclusion, national/regional identity, and immigration. Ward's insights were intrinsic to the success of the major commemoration, **Freedom City 2017 (FC2017)**, and its lasting influence on public awareness of the region's diverse history. Educational and creative practitioners used Ward's research to foster community engagement with local BAME (black and minority ethnic) history. This went on to reach beyond the initial focus of North East England to directly inform educational projects across the UK [E1, p2].

4.1 Improved understanding and commemoration of regional BAME history

Reflecting on the change she had witnessed since 2015, Chi Onwurah (MP, Newcastle Central), recalled that while growing up as a mixed-race child on Tyneside she '*simply had no knowledge*' of the region's connections with King and the US civil rights movement [E2]. This experience, noted by Adam Collerton (Co-Director, Northern Roots, a creative arts charity), was common throughout the North East [E3, p1]. Yet thanks to what Onwurah called the '*indispensable*' contribution of Ward's research, a '*transformation*' had occurred in public awareness of the region's complex racial history, '*bringing to light a lost, or at least deeply buried, history of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity*' [E2]. Northern Roots secured over GBP1,000,000 in funding '*that simply would not have been forthcoming without [Ward's] research and expertise*' [E3, p3]. This supported a range of outreach work where people participated in activities that confronted the challenges in King's Newcastle speech: '*the great and urgent problems of racism, poverty and war*'.

Ward's research was praised by leading civic stakeholders as the driving force behind FC2017, a large-scale commemorative festival [E4]. FC2017 events ranged from exhibitions by world-renowned contemporary artists, to the 'Freedom on the Tyne' production, an immersive performance where 400 volunteers and 5,000 members of the public followed global civil rights stories through the streets of Newcastle to rally at the Tyne Bridge [E5, p3]. Approximately 100,000 people participated in the wider FC2017 programme, with approximately 30 civic, cultural, and educational partners, working across 26 venues [E3, p3]. FC2017 received extensive media exposure from local to international news outlets [E6, listed], showcasing what Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative (NGI) described as an '*exciting*', '*thought-provoking*', and '*inspiring*' commemorative festival [E5, p2].

NGI's evaluation showed 88% of attendees felt more knowledgeable about King's visit and regional BAME heritage in a broader sense [E5, p3]. BBC News reported that activities, such as '*#MLK1967*' (an immersive production by award-winning artist Jeremy Dellar that drew on Ward's research by having King's 'lost' speech read in public spaces by fifty local volunteers), transformed popular understandings. Interviewees confirmed they were previously unaware of historic ties between Tyneside and the US civil rights movement [E6, p4-8]. This sense of revelation is summed up by the Lord Mayor, who explained how it was not only fascinating to think that King visited Newcastle, but thanks to Ward's research the region is able to celebrate '*the reasons why he came to our City, the only place in the UK outside of London he ever visited*' [E4].

4.2 Renewed and sustained engagement with BAME cultural heritage

Ward's key historical findings '*brought Dr King's legacy to life for a new generation*', according to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle [E4] and were the basis for his collaborations with a variety of cultural/educational practitioners.

Journey to Justice (JtoJ) is a social justice organisation that undertakes educational projects for local communities, using histories of US and UK civil rights campaigns to inspire contemporary activism. JtoJ approached Ward to serve as historical advisor for its Newcastle-based pilot (Spring 2015). Approximately 3,000 visitors attended the main exhibition [E1, p3], which used Ward's research for content and thematic focus. Carrie Supple (Director) describes Ward's input as '*instrumental*' in achieving this outcome, '*his unrivalled research into the history*

of race relations on Tyneside (...) provided us with valuable insights that were otherwise unavailable [E1, p2]. Feedback from the JtoJ pilot indicated that, after attending, 80% of respondents felt more aware of the African American freedom struggle, as well as the UK's own history of civil rights activism. Most participants stated they were inspired to learn more about other social justice campaigns.

Motivated by this success, JtoJ grew into a national organisation, with 375 full members and hundreds of volunteers, across 14 cities throughout the UK. Approximately 165,000 people have visited their travelling exhibition since 2015, with 6,000 attending associated arts and educational events [E1, p2]. JtoJ continued to draw on Ward's scholarship and expertise, utilising exhibition materials he developed for the Newcastle pilot and seeking guidance when elements of his research are relevant to specific activities. By providing a fresh, international perspective on the history of UK race relations, Ward's work supported JtoJ's ability to engage with under-engaged, often marginalised communities, such as a project involving cross-generational work with Bristol's Somali community (Feb-Nov 2018), which drew on Ward's work on the North Shields Somali community in his monograph [R3; E1, p2].

Ward's research benefitted the **Summerhill Trust**; a community heritage organisation dedicated to preserving the historic area of Summerhill in Newcastle (as featured in popular BBC series 'A House Through Time'). Ward's research into the visit of former slave and civil rights advocate Frederick Douglass, provided the Trust with '*a wholly new race relations dimension*' to their work. These insights were '*invaluable*' in helping the Trust to persuade Newcastle City Council of Summerhill's significant ties to transatlantic abolitionism [E7]. In February 2018, a new memorial was unveiled at 5 Summerhill Grove, where Douglass had stayed with the Richardson family, who led the campaign to formally purchase his freedom. This, along with a bronze statue of Dr King erected in 2017, illustrate a new interest in the region's links to global struggles for racial justice, which according to Newcastle City Council, has greatly '*added to the diversity of Tyneside's commemorative landscape*' [E8].

The Summerhill Trust also utilised Ward's research to improve community-heritage engagement with a Douglass-themed North Stars event (approximately 400 attendees, November 2018) and a permanent information installation in its community centre (viewed by approximately 22,000 people). The Trust believes initiatives predicated on Ward's work have created '*lasting and widespread awareness of [their] community's long-overlooked history of diversity, tolerance, and activism*' [E7].

Following the success of FC2017, **Northern Roots (NR)** continued to draw extensively on Ward's research findings. These insights into contemporary North East race relations supported the development of a FC2017 legacy programme and improved NR's educational capacity. NR explained how they have been able to secure funding totalling GBP198,500, facilitating entirely new outreach activity that promotes sustained engagement with the historical themes explored by Ward and FC2017 [E3, p2]. This includes mentoring for refugee, black and Asian artists, and music and social justice projects with **Ouseburn Learning Trust schools** involving 665 children, plus staff and parents [E3, p8]. Adam Collerton, Co-Director of Northern Roots explained how Ward's research continued to inform their work, helping '*to inspire a new generation with the words and teachings of Dr King*' [E3, p3].

Famous 4.15 Performance School used Ward's research into Tyneside's links to the black freedom struggle, to inform their work on #RESPECT2018 (an original drama-music-dance production about social inclusion, performed for approximately 450 people in October-November 2018). Audience feedback revealed impacts on the BAME community, as Founder-Director, Katherine Monaco, observed, #RESPECT2018 '*greatly improved people's knowledge of Tyneside's black heritage and history of racial diversity.*' Famous 4.15 routinely consulted Ward on performances that '*celebrate the region's diversity*', demonstrating lasting impact on the organisation [E9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)		
Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	Testimonial - Carrie Supple, Director of Journey to Justice. Letter with Footsteps to Freedom Evaluation and Annual Reports as appendices	Corroborates the impact of Footsteps to Freedom, and work/expansion of Journey to Justice
E2	Testimonial - Chi Onwurah, MP for Newcastle Central	Corroborates the impact of Ward's work since 2014
E3	Testimonial - Adam Collerton Co-Director, Northern Roots with Project Reports as appendices	Corroborates the impact of FC2017
E4	Testimonial - Lord Mayor of Newcastle	Corroborates the impact of FC2017
E5	Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative, 'Interim Report'	Corroborates the impact of FC2017
E6	Summary of news coverage including BBC news article 13 th Nov 2017	Corroborates the impact of FC2017
E7	Testimonial - Summerhill Trust	Corroborates the impact of Summerhill Trust activity
E8	Testimonial - Newcastle City Council, Historic Environment Office	Corroborates the impact of Summerhill Trust activity
E9	Testimonial - Katherine Monaco, Founder-Director, Famous 4.15 Performance School	Corroborates the impact of #RESPECT2018