

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> Anglia Ruskin University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA 27 English Language and Literature		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Enabling non-academics to carry out creative-historical research into migration histories		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2007-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Jeannette Baxter	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Associate Professor and Research Convenor	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 01.09.2007- to date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> December 2016-December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Baxter's research into surrealist approaches to writing the histories of marginalised communities and individuals has enabled arts and refugee organisations, community groups and schools to investigate and retell migration histories in and of the Norfolk area. Delivered through a range of projects over a four-year period, impact achieved includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Enhancing the research capacity and changing the theatre practices of The Common Lot theatre company.</b></li> <li><b>Educating</b> 59,783 pupils, aged 4-18 years, from 103 (20% of all) Norfolk schools about refugee migration issues.</li> <li><b>Policy changes</b> for Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary (NSoS) and <b>increased participation</b> in NSoS network activities (from 7 to 103 schools). This has <b>enabled 9 schools</b> to achieve School of Sanctuary Status since 2018 (quadrupling the number of Schools of Sanctuary (SoS) in Norfolk from 3 to 12).</li> <li><b>Increasing awareness</b> and <b>changing understanding of the history of migration</b> in Norfolk.</li> <li><b>Implementation of new teaching methods</b> and <b>enhanced educational outcomes through a migration heritage curriculum project</b> in a Norwich-based SoS, involving 260 junior school pupils, aged 7-11 years, and 20 teachers as surrealist historians.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Baxter first demonstrated surrealist literature's potential to recover and re-present marginalised histories in <b>output 1</b>, which was funded by a British Academy Small Research Grant (<b>a</b>) and established her as a leading Ballard scholar. The book challenges conventional notions of history as a fixed, linear narrative made up of self-evident truths, and shows it to be a process of storytelling, which is mutable, partial, and vulnerable to manipulation as well as being full of restorative possibility. A key research insight is Ballard's use of surrealist collage as an alternative, non-linear form of storytelling, which ruptures the smooth narration of official versions of history to allow marginalised voices to speak.</p> <p>Baxter has since developed research on exile stories arising out of World War Two and the Holocaust. Work on the Norfolk-based German migrant author, W.G. Sebald led to a co-edited collection in which Baxter's essay (<b>output 2</b>) initiated new thinking about Sebald, surrealism and historical recovery. Key research findings include Sebald's innovations with the surrealist</p>		

method and motif of chance. Chance was vital to Sebald's research for, and composition of, his novels because it forced him to make imaginative connections between randomly assembled historical materials.

Supported by a British Academy Small Research Grant (**b**) to conduct archival research, **outputs 3 and 4** take critical understanding of Leonora Carrington's exile writings in new directions. Key insights include how Carrington continually re-writes her story to raise questions about individual and collective complicity and explore connections between personal and collective experiences of exile and displacement. These storytelling strategies stress the role of the imagination as a legitimate and ethically engaged form of witnessing, and present history as something that is alive and in process. They also represent a challenge to a 'fact-based' notion of history.

Taken together, these key research insights led to the development of a surrealist creative-historical research methodology for non-academic audiences, enabling them to recover migration histories and recount them in creative formats. This methodology underpins a range of projects with schools and community groups which have led to a wide range of beneficial impacts.

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

- (1) Baxter, J., 2009. *J. G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination: Spectacular Authorship* (Farnham: Ashgate). ISBN 9780754662670. **Peer-reviewed; submitted to REF 2014.** Available from the HEI on demand.
- (2) Baxter, J., 2013. 'Surrealist Vertigo in *Schwindel Gefühle*'. In: Baxter, J., Hutchinson, B. and Henitiuk, V., eds. *A Literature of Restitution: Critical Essays on W. G. Sebald*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. ISBN 9780719088520. pp. 77-93. **Peer-reviewed; submitted to REF 2014.** Available from the HEI on demand.
- (3) Baxter, J., 2017. 'Self-Translation and Holocaust Writing: Leonora Carrington's *Down Below*'. In: Boase-Beier, J., Davies, P., Hammel, A., and Winters, M., eds. *Translating Holocaust Lives*, London and New York: Bloomsbury. ISBN 9781474250283. pp. 221-240. **Commissioned; peer-reviewed; in REF 2.**
- (4) Baxter, J., 2019. 'Recasting the Human: Leonora Carrington's Dark Exilic Imagination'. In: Watz, A., ed. *Surrealist Women's Writing*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, January 2021. ISBN 978-1-5261-3202-4. pp. 68-86. **Commissioned; peer-reviewed; in REF 2. Delayed due to COVID-19 [see REF2].**

#### Grants in support of this research include:

- a) Sept 2007-Sept 2008. PI: Baxter. *J. G. Ballard's Surrealist Imagination*. British Academy Small Research Grant (£7,500). **Peer-reviewed.**
- b) Sept 2012-Dec 2013. PI: Baxter. *Novel Surrealisms/Anti-Fascisms Exquisite Corpse*. British Academy Small Research Grant (£3,600). **Peer-reviewed.**
- c) Dec 2019-Dec 2020. PI: Baxter. *Havens East: Uncovering Lost Histories of 1930s Basque Child Refugees in East Anglia*. Heritage Lottery Fund (£54,600). **Peer-reviewed.**

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

The benefits from Baxter's work which derived to the arts and refugee organisations, community groups and schools were achieved through the delivery of a series of projects, underpinned by Baxter's creative-historical research methodology.

**1. Come Yew In! (Dec 2016 - July 2017)** was a collaboration project with The Common Lot, a community theatre company based in Norwich, which won the EDP Norfolk Arts Awards People's Choice award for the best large project (**IMP1**) in 2017. The Director commissioned Baxter to develop a creative-historical research methodology for participatory action researchers to make a play about Norwich migration histories. Together they won bids totalling £26,000 which funded the project.

**Impact on community theatre practices and enhanced research capacity:** Baxter's research methodology has impacted on The Common Lot's theatre practice by embedding participatory action research into the design and delivery of all their projects. This has enhanced the company's research capacity - through knowledge and skills transfer - and its ability to secure funding for heritage projects.

Baxter trained 18 members from The Common Lot and 4 members from New Routes Integration (a local refugee charity) as surrealist historians. The Director writes of the benefit to the research participants who acquired systematic skills – using online, print and archive sources, recording and documenting data – and knowledge of the ethical considerations of interviewing. However, it was the methodological focus on the role of the imagination in the re-telling of history, and the introduction of chance as a legitimate practice, that enhanced their research capacity and their experience of research as a political act. These approaches influenced how the research participants carried out their research as well as their creative responses to it, establishing emotional and intellectual connections with their findings. The methodology further transformed their attitude towards research by empowering them – 'by following their noses' (as Sebald put it) - to recover and re-tell stories about people just like them (**IMP2**). 63 disparate migration stories representing 900 years were collected and passed to a locally commissioned writing team. The use of collage for purposes of recovery and representation influenced directly how the writers recounted these stories. Consequently, Come Yew In! took the form of a vast historical collage, bringing a wide variety of migration stories into dialogue.

759 community volunteers were directly involved in producing Come Yew In!. It was performed free to over 3,000 people across 10 Norwich locations, including areas of high deprivation and low engagement in the arts. A representative from Norwich Community Council commented that, 'Both the community engagement and the performances, which ... attracted large audiences, raised awareness of Norwich as a Welcoming City ..., reminding us of the challenges we face today' (**IMP3**). 52% of the surveyed audience (227) responded that the show had enhanced their perception of Norwich as a welcoming city. 42% committed to taking further action through involvement with refugee and migration projects in the city (**IMP3**). Come Yew In! raised £3,500 for The Common Lot, enabling future community projects, and £3,500 for New Routes Integration, which established an emergency housing fund for its clients used to reduce rough sleeping. Baxter's research methodology also led to practice-based research publications, such as the Come Yew In! Songbook. This free book of original songs, which the researchers co-produced with local writers and composers, and co-edited with Baxter, was distributed to 63 schools (representing 19,976 pupils) participating in Norfolk Welcomes 2018 (see 2 below). The Songbook led to direct educational benefit when it served as the key resource for a Norwich-based SoS migration curriculum project (see 3 below).

**2. Norfolk Welcomes (2018 – 2020)** was a collaboration between NSoS, Amnesty International and (since 2020) UNHCR, which has **educated 59,783 pupils from 103 Norfolk primary and secondary schools (20% of all Norfolk schools)**. Baxter's surrealist creative-historical research method has impacted on the design, delivery and strategic direction of Norfolk Welcomes (NW), as well as the form and content of NW activities (**IMP4**). NW was a Day of Action about migration and sanctuary-seeking.

Baxter has led Norfolk Welcomes (NW) participatory action research since 2018 when NSoS commissioned her to replicate her surrealist creative-historical methodology with 21 new, participatory-action, researchers, including refugees and asylum seekers, to generate new stories of Norwich migration history. They worked with Baxter and 15 teachers to develop 14 schemes of work and practice-based research activities (for Key Stage 1, 2 and Secondary pupils). These are available on the NSoS educational site (**IMP4**). The NSoS lead writes that through the activities, pupils have made intellectual and emotional connections with past and present migration stories and increased their awareness of key issues facing migrants and refugees locally and globally (**IMP4**). As one pupil commented: 'I like how we are welcoming citizens in our country. I don't like ... that there are refugees with no home. I love how we realize

that they are people and that we respect them the way they should be respected' (**IMP5**). NW has also directly led to acts of solidarity, welcome and community-building, such as Coltishall Primary School's response to recent, local anti-immigrant discourse, which targeted asylum seekers 'housed' at Badersfield (formerly RAF Coltishall) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children from the school made use of NW resources to produce welcome cards and messages of solidarity to which the asylum seeker community responded positively, leading to the instigation of a collaborative art project as Coltishall Primary begins its journey to become a SoS (**IMP4**).

Beyond impacts on schools and school children, NW **has changed national and international public understanding of refugee migration history in Norfolk**. NW2020 was made possible by the successful Heritage Lottery bid in which Baxter was PI. The project, called Havens East, recovered the lost stories of Basque child refugees in 1930s East Anglia, including in Norfolk (see COVID-19 statement). This multi-partner project, including the support of UNHCR, introduced new beneficiary groups to the NW project, including the Basque Children of '37 Association, and enabled Refugee Week 2020 (online due to COVID-19).

Launched to support Refugee Week 2020, the Havens East online exhibition received 1,618 visitors from the UK, Spain, US, France, Argentina, Australia, China, Mexico, Germany, and Greece (**IMP6**) in its first week, raising awareness and increasing public understanding of this forgotten chapter in refugee history. One visitor commented: 'I didn't know anything about the Basque child refugees before visiting the Havens East website' (**IMP7**). Another observed that the exhibition helped them to understand better the plight of modern-day refugees: 'I am a charity volunteer, meeting many immigrants and refugees, and this has reminded me that so many will have faced similar situations and hardships as the Basque Children' (**IMP7**). One Norwich-based research participant, herself a refugee, commented that the project increased her knowledge of refugee history and enhanced her appreciation of the connections between the Basque children's story and that of her own family: 'It created a fantastic opportunity for me to explore many unknown issues of Basque children refugees in the 1930s [...] I appreciated how they needed to be welcomed warmly to ease their troubles as my children felt such a necessity of welcoming at the school when arriving in the UK' (**IMP8**).

As a result of the exhibition, second-generation descendants of the Basque children contacted Baxter to find out more about their family members, and she connected them with the Basque Children of '37 Association. A trustee of the Association writes how these connections have already made a significant contribution to the network of surviving children and their families. Specifically, it has generated important Anglo-Basque connections with three families sharing new information that enhances the wider BCA'37 mission to advance knowledge of the Basque exile of 1937. He also writes how Havens East has also brought new national and international audiences to the Association, whilst local, national and international media attention on the project provided significant exposure for the Association and its mission (**IMP6**).

**Impact of Norfolk Welcomes on NSoS Capacity, Policy and Strategy:** As a direct result of NW, **the number of schools participating in NSoS network activities has expanded from 7 to 103**. NW has become a mandatory event for schools aspiring to the SoS Award, and, over 3 years, 9 schools have gained SoS status since engaging with NW (there are currently 12 SoS in Norfolk). NSoS's strategic aim to connect pupils with Norfolk's rich history as a place of sanctuary has been enabled directly by the research (**IMP4**). NSoS have also benefitted from being networked into Baxter's Heritage Lottery project. Baxter and NSoS produced a 'Welcomes' toolkit for schools and communities for national roll out in 2020. This led to a collaborative project with UNHCR on refugee education and advocacy, postponed due to COVID-19 (see COVID-19 statement).

**3. Come Yew In Again! (CYIA!) (Jan 2019–2020):** Following the success of 'Come Yew In!', a Norwich-based SoS changed their history curriculum to produce their version of the project. Baxter was commissioned to replicate her surrealist creative-historical methodology and work with 200 children, 20 teachers, and 8 families as surrealist historians using the Come Yew In!

Songbook as a source text. This had significant impact on **teaching practices and improved oracy levels**. The school's Deputy Head reported increased engagement and significant improvements in oracy levels over the course of the CYIA! Project. These benefits stemmed directly from the surrealist creative-historical research workshops led by Baxter, which enhanced the capacity of staff and students to think anew about history, do research and understand marginalization and displacement. The teachers have since adopted in their teaching the methodological focus on history as storytelling and the importance of the imagination in historical research (**IMP9**).

In March 2019, all 200 children took part in the CYIA! cross-school research conference, where they presented their research findings in creative formats to 60 children from Avenues Junior School, a Norwich-based SoS. The Deputy Head observed that the conference marked a step change for the school, leading it to behave very differently on the day and since. Even the most vulnerable of learners demonstrated increased confidence and enjoyment in telling their stories to new and unfamiliar school audiences (**IMP9**). Empowered by their research into past migration histories, the children researched contemporary migration stories from within the school community. 8 families also joined the project as co-researchers. This led to cross-generational exchange as the children interviewed the families and worked with members of The Common Lot to turn research insights into songs and sketches for the final show. In July 2019, CYIA! was performed by all 200 children and 20 teachers to an audience of 155 family members, project partners, and the public. 95.8% of the 119 audience members asked agreed that seeing the show enabled them to understand the benefits that incomers and migrants bring to the community (**IMP10**). A focus group with 22 participating children reported that 'Participation in CYIA! built pupils' knowledge about stories and backgrounds of migrants with all reporting that they [...] were more aware of the number of different countries pupils and their families came from' (**IMP10**). The collective impact of 'CYIA!' can be measured in the school's decision to repeat the project as part of the history curriculum in Spring 2020 (see COVID-19 statement for Come Yew In, Again and Again!).

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

**IMP1.** Norfolk Arts Awards Celebrate Our County's Cultural Champions':

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/going-out/norfolk-arts-awards-celebrate-our-county-s-cultural-champions-1-5246331>

**IMP2.** Testimonial from the Director of The Common Lot.

**IMP3.** 'Come Yew In' evaluation report for Town Close Estate Charity, the main project funder.

**IMP4.** Testimonial from the Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary & Norfolk Welcomes lead.

**IMP5.** Norfolk Welcomes/Day of Welcome evaluation form for pupils.

**IMP6.** Testimonial from trustee of the UK Basque Child Association '37.

**IMP7.** Havens East visitor evaluation form.

**IMP8.** Testimonial from Norwich-based participatory action researcher for Havens East.

**IMP9.** Testimonial from the Deputy Head at Wensum Junior School Norwich for CYIA!

**IMP10.** Focus group report & audience survey results for 'Come Yew In Again! Performance.