

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Westminster		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Changing Attitudes to the Past: Political, Cultural, and Built Heritage		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2015 – 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Pippa Catterall	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of History and Policy	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> October 2012 - ongoing
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> Aug 2013 – Dec 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>A key theme that has emerged through Professor Pippa Catterall's diverse research is the contested ways in which contemporary society chooses to remember, memorialise or indeed forget the Past. This theme has been developed and explored through her direct engagement with heritage organisations and has resulted in the following impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising community awareness of local history and social justice through her founding and chairing the George Lansbury Memorial Trust (GLMT).</li> <li>• Achieving completion of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported project at the Grade 1 Crossness Pumping Station and establishing this site as a sustainable heritage attraction.</li> <li>• Increasing inclusivity in public spaces and in professional and heritage practice via work with Arup and the Royal Historical Society.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Prof Pippa Catterall has explored the relationship between the Past and the contemporary throughout her career. Since joining the University of Westminster in 2012, she has particularly focused on the relationship between the historical development of politics, religion and identities in shaping contemporary politics and states. For instance, her ground-breaking monograph on <i>Labour and the Free Churches 1918-1939: Religion, Radicalism and Righteousness</i> (2016) ends with a taxonomic analysis of the factors shaping the relationship between religion and politics both historically and in the present [1].</p> <p>Catterall previously explored this relationship between religion, concepts of social justice and politics across the <i>longue durée</i>, concluding with analysis of its impact on contemporary policymaking, through a detailed analysis of the shifting nature of the Labour party's alcohol policy from its Victorian antecedents [2]. A similar concern with the relationship between ideals, identities, political structures and changing awareness of the global dimensions of inequality informed her work on the evolution of Labour's approach to empire and Commonwealth during the twentieth century [3]. This latter work intersects with her long-standing interest in the historical development of identity politics, explored in her <i>longue durée</i> analysis of the role of communications in shaping the emergence and characteristics of ethno-religious identity conflicts [4]. This interest in the history and contemporary manifestations of identity politics is exemplified by Catterall's central role in founding and editing the international multi-disciplinary journal <i>National Identities</i>.</p> <p>This work has increasingly concentrated on the need to bring critical historical scholarship to bear on politicised readings of the Past, reflected through a growing focus on the politics of memory and its intersections with contemporary debates in identity politics. This has resulted in a particular interest in how and what societies choose to remember from the Past, why they do so, and with what cultural and political consequences. This work on identities has also engendered a growing interest in how identities are encapsulated, memorialised or excluded in professions, public organisations and public space. Catterall's work has thus focused increasingly on heritage in the built environment as a key aspect of the dialogue between those residues of the Past that have been preserved and the contested ways in which contemporary society chooses to remember, memorialise or indeed forget that Past.</p> <p>This turn in her research is exemplified by Catterall's use of the concepts of Pierre Nora to establish a taxonomic framework for delineating and explaining the social and cultural roles played by <i>lieux de mémoire</i> (sites of memory) and the politicisation of heritage that can ensue. Catterall focuses upon the need to read the functions of sites of memory critically, rather than reifying them: as such sites primarily function 'in a dialogue with the Present... they speak to identities in the</p>		

Present, and thus to the politics of who we are and how we got here, who is included and what are our values' [5]. These insights were applied to her role in heritage management and distilled into the subsequently published keynote address she was invited to give to the annual conference of the Heritage of London Trust in 2016, attended by 115 architects, planners, conservationists and heritage professionals.

Catterall followed this up by exploring the politicisation of memory and the occlusion in contemporary political debates of the historical development of Britain's relations with Islam. A particular aspect of her analysis concerned the debates around proposed memorialisation in the public realm of the sacrifices of Muslim soldiers serving the empire during the Great War [6]. This work informed Catterall's response to the controversies that erupted in 2020 following the toppling of Edward Colston's monument in Bristol. In June 2020 she was commissioned by LSE British Politics and History to write 'On Statues and History', which argues that these sites represent not history, but what particular groups in the past have chosen to remember, sometimes long after (as in Colston's case) the event or person being celebrated. They should not, therefore, be seen as some reification of that past but instead as in dialogue with the present in which they continue to be sited.

Her analysis of public statues and the skewed version of the past that they represent – given that in the UK they are overwhelmingly of figures who are male, white and heterosexual – is an important component of her current research. This work examines how interventions in the public realm can challenge the ways in which history and social order have been conventionally narrativised. For instance, Catterall's podcasted presentation on 'Queering Public Space' to a gathering of 120 practitioners at the international infrastructure partnership Arup explained how the design of spaces, such as town squares, can function in an exclusionary manner due to aesthetic considerations that continue to shape the historical use of such sites by those who have traditionally dominated public spaces. The enthusiastic response from Arup leadership and members of staff from across their international sites led to Arup funding a £15,000 pilot project into 'Queering Public Space' in July 2020, on which Catterall is working with Dr Ammar Azzouz (Arup/University of Oxford).

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

- [1] Catterall, P. 2016. *Labour and the Free Churches, 1918-1939: Radicalism, Righteousness and Religion*. London: Bloomsbury. Described as a 'meticulously researched, perceptive, and subtle study' (Church History and Religious Culture [journal review](#)) and as both 'a splendid contribution to the history of both the Labour Party and British nonconformity' and 'an excellent piece of historical scholarship in which "radicalism, righteousness, and religion" receive a detailed and sympathetic treatment' (History: The Journal of the Historical Association [review](#)).
- [2] Catterall, P. 2014. *Labour and the Politics of Alcohol: The Decline of a Cause*. London: Institute of Alcohol Studies.
- [3] Catterall, P. 2018. 'The Plural Society: Labour and the Commonwealth Idea 1900-1964' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46/5: 821-844.
- [4] Catterall, P and Dingley, J. 2020. 'Language, religion and ethno-national identity: the role of knowledge, culture and communication', *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 43/2, 410-29.
- [5] Catterall, P. 2017. 'Changing Attitudes to the Past: *Lieux de Mémoire* and Contested Histories' *Political Quarterly*. 88/4: 631-639.
- [6] Catterall, P. 2019. 'British Encounters with the "Islamic World" 1921-1989' in J. Q. Olmstead (ed) *Britain in the Islamic World: Imperial and Post-Imperial Connections* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 225-250.

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

Catterall's research interests led to her 2011 appointment as the representative historian on the London Historic Environments Forum and to periodic invitations to advise on various consultations and Heritage Foresight exercises for Historic England. It also led her to apply her research-based knowledge to memorialisation projects through practical engagement with heritage bodies and professionals, effecting change both in the creation and renovation of heritage spaces as described below.

### ***Raising community awareness of local history and social justice***

George Lansbury was a key figure in the Labour Party and featured extensively in outputs [1] to [3]. In 2012, Catterall co-founded the George Lansbury Memorial Trust (GLMT), which commemorates Lansbury's role as a pioneering socialist, social reformer, suffragist, and East End radical. As Nigel Whiskin, MBE, President of the Trust confirms, in Catterall's capacity as its Chair: 'She has consistently endeavoured with considerable tact and skill to focus the committee on the key aspects of GL's [George Lansbury's] political philosophy and political activities' [a-i].

GLMT works closely with Tower Hamlets archives and PoplarHARCA (the housing association that manages the estate named in Lansbury's honour, located in Poplar where he served as a Labour MP) **to raise awareness among the local community of its history and Lansbury's place in it** [a-i]. Every year GLMT organises a memorial lecture delivered by 'distinguished speakers' – such as Jon Cruddas MP, Rachel Reeves MP, Chris Bryant MP, Dame Angela Lansbury DBE & Sir Christopher Frayling, Ken Loach, and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams [a-i]. Whiskin writes: 'In the choice of speakers for the GL Memorial Trust lectures, Professor Catterall has ensured that we foster GL's legacy and principles and provide links to contemporary political and social issues that demonstrate their continued significance' [a-i]. Importantly, as Whiskin indicates, these lectures **encompass aspects of Lansbury's legacy that are directly relevant to the local community**; for instance, Mike Tyrrell's presentation in 2019 on social housing and living conditions in both GL's time and the present resonates with residents of the Poplar Ward given that, in comparison to the rest of the borough, it has a higher than average proportion of socially rented properties and of households with five or more people living in them [a-ii]. Reflecting the community profile, the talks usually attract an ethnically diverse audience of 100-200 people, as well as leading journalists and local MPs.

Other activities include PoplarHARCA and GLMT's joint organisation of a Film Festival celebrating the work of Angela Lansbury, GL's grand-daughter, in April 2014. As the *Evening Standard* reported at the time: 'Dame Angela said she hoped the festival would also **teach youngsters about the area's history and her family's work for social justice**', and local media attention attests to the success of the festival in achieving the Trust's aim of bringing contemporary exposure to the work of George Lansbury among the local community [a-iii]. Reporting in the *East London Advertiser* informed their readers that 'George Lansbury led the 1921 Rates Strike as Mayor of Poplar and went to prison rather than charge the poor the same London precept as richer districts like Westminster' (March 2014) and that 'Poplar's Lansbury Estate where the weekend festival was staged was named after George Lansbury, [and] built as a showpiece of the 1951 Festival of Britain, an example of "housing for the people" after the Second World War that he had campaigned for in the 1930s as MP and leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party' (April 2014) [a-iii]. This promotion meant the festival successfully reached the community; for instance, at an open-air screening of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* in Crisp Street Angela Lansbury 'was mobbed by hundreds of fans', while a session at the 150-seater Spotlight Centre at Langdon Park, in which she talked about her career and grandfather, was at full capacity [a-iii].

### ***Completing the 'Great Stink' Project***

Catterall's engagement with alternative, or underappreciated, sites of heritage can be seen in her work with the Crossness Engines Trust (CET).

The Crossness Pumping Station is a Grade 1 listed facility opened in 1865. Following the 'Great Stink' in the summer of 1858, caused by the stench of the open sewer the Thames had then become, Joseph Bazalgette was charged with creating London's first comprehensive and effective sewer system. Crossness' massive beam engines served the pumping station at the outfall of the southern system of the sewers he created. The engines ceased operation in the early twentieth century and the site was in a decayed state when the CET was established in 1987 to restore it. In 2008 CET won a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £1.5m towards the £2.7m 'Great Stink' project of restoration, provision of heritage facilities and development of a museum commemorating Bazalgette and his contribution to public health in London.

Problems with poor governance and lack of public access to the site led to HLF suspending the project in 2010. This remained the situation when Catterall, in light of previous experience with HLF projects with Bexley Heritage Trust (BHT) and the Welling and East Wickham War Memorial Trust (EWWWMT), was invited to join the CET Board in 2014. Drawing on her expertise in heritage management (consolidated into her publication [5] during this REF cycle) and earlier research on

the history of engineering and engineering management, these two major problems were resolved. This **allowed CET to access the HLF grant money again and thus complete the project.**

As Gill Andrews (the then President of the Society of Antiquaries and HLF mentor on the 'Great Stink' project) writes, Catterall 'proved invaluable as a trustee from 2014 onwards when CET's handling of the Heritage Grant funding needed clarification and subsequently substantial updating. Without her input the Heritage Fund would have had concerns about on-going management and financial control – and indeed the viability of the entire project' [b-i].

Having **introduced improvements in governance**, including the establishment of a Finance Committee, a '[r]eview of financial management systems enabled Pippa to move on to updating the Business Plan, another area of CET's activities where attention was needed and skills lacking' [b-i].

Meanwhile, the second problem concerning public access could only be tackled through improved relations with Thames Water (TW); the overall owners of the site. Catterall persuaded the CET Board to invite TW to appoint a representative to it, Tim Hockney, who proved **instrumental in resolving the access issues associated with the site's co-location** with a high-security TW plant.

Through these activities, Catterall successfully persuaded the HLF to allow CET to recommence the 'Great Stink' project in 2015. Furthermore, she secured supplementary funds, totalling £50,000 from Cory Environmental Trust, without which CET would have had a shortfall on the partnership funding required to unlock the HLF money. This also **allowed sensitive landscaping of this historic site, which had fallen into disrepair**, through a repurposing of some of the HLF grant. Catterall's good relationship with Historic England helped to ensure that the many conservation issues this work threw up were dealt with appropriately and as expeditiously as possible. As the former Labour MP, John Austin, then chair of CET notes: 'it was invaluable to have Pippa, as an historian with a wide knowledge of the museum world and contacts who we could rely on for advice and assistance. Pippa's professional expertise was also invaluable in our dealings with Historic England over the renovation of the buildings and overall site' [b-ii].

The CET celebrated the opening of the new museum by Sir Peter Bazalgette, the great-great-grandson of Sir Joseph, in July 2016. A year later Catterall succeeded Austin as Chair of CET [b-ii]. In October 2017, exposed asbestos was discovered in the Beam Engine House (BEH) section of the site making it a severe safety hazard for visitors and staff. Having immediately closed the BEH, Catterall worked closely with Pam Winders [b-iii] to resolve the situation. Together they **raised funds finally amounting to £492,329 in order to tackle this health and safety problem.** Sir Peter Bazalgette praised Catterall for her work on this matter: 'just let me say a big thank you to you for everything you've done... particularly sorting the asbestos problem!' [b-iv]

Once in operational mode, Catterall **helped to ensure Crossness was a viable and sustainable site for tourism** by directly drawing on her research expertise in historical scholarship and its public communication. For instance, shortly after the opening of the museum at Crossness in July 2016 an education officer was appointed, both to develop the resources and outreach of the museum and to engage with the local community and schools. In overseeing these developments Andrews states that 'Pippa brought to the Board exactly what this role needed – a combination of business acumen and academic knowledge' [b-i]. She notes that 'CET trustees as a group had considerable technical skills – used to great effect in the restoration of the site – but had considerably less experience in the operational skills required to run a heritage attraction. [...] Her [Catterall's] leadership ensured that as interpretation content was finessed it was informed by in-depth historical understanding while at the same time focus on the commercial viability of the site was maintained' [b-i].

### ***Increasing inclusivity in public spaces and heritage practice***

Catterall's interest in the linkage between heritage and space [5] and how this can shape local environments and create safe spaces for people of all communities and identities [6] has resulted in impacts in relation to both urban spatial design and the working lives of historians.

Catterall is now collaborating with Arup on a practice-based research project under the direction of their Associate Director of Integrated Planning (also their Diversity and Inclusion champion), Matt Dillon. As Catterall's collaborator at Arup, Ammar Azzouz, attests, this knowledge exchange has been of a benefit to this professional infrastructure partnership as the 'themes and questions' presented and posed by Catterall 'are of vital importance to architects, urban planners



and designers in their quest of more diverse, equal and just spaces' [c-i]. Azzouz adds that Catterall's engagement has 'generated interest from different individuals working in different groups in Arup who are interested in **building a bridge between academics (as Prof Catterall) and practice (as in Arup) [...] as a way to shift the research into more practical settings**' [c-ij]. By the end of 2020 Catterall had disseminated preliminary findings from the project to four workshops of Arup professionals in Britain, Europe and North America. Responses conveyed the impact these workshops had in making participants aware of often overlooked issues and exclusions ('very telling the privilege that so many of us have that we have been able to not think about this in the past') [c-ii].

This work [intersected](#) with a further significant impact, resulting from Catterall's work with the Royal Historical Society (RHS) working group on LGBT+ Histories and Historians. This working group was set up in 2019 and started its activities by surveying the British historical community, including history students, on the experiences of LGBT+ people within the profession and attitudes to teaching and research on LGBT+ histories. Catterall was among the LGBT+ historians invited to advise on the design of this survey and, in 2020, on an early draft of the subsequent report. She, among others, drew attention to the requirement for more care in addressing this very sensitive subject, and offered suggestions for redrafting. These were considered so helpful that in June 2020 she was invited to join the working group and became a **major contributor to the RHS report on LGBT+ Histories and Historians** published on 28 September 2020 [c-iii]. Margot Finn, the then President of the RHS, noted: 'Before you joined our team, there was a real chance of failure--either by producing an inadequate report, or failing to produce one at all. Your contributions, calm commitment, knowledge and savvy have been instrumental to what we've done' [c-iv].

This report reflects Catterall's concern to recapture marginalised histories and to ensure their appropriate representation in both historical and heritage practice [5, 6]. Importantly, it **provides evidence of discrimination, marginalisation and prejudice towards LGBT+ historians at all levels** from undergraduate students to senior practitioners, thus enabling and stimulating work in this sector to counter this. As one history graduate writes: 'This report, the first of its kind, articulates my experience as an LGBTQ student of queer history with validating but startling accuracy – my peers and I are not accustomed to hearing such narratives reflected in policy research. [...] This report has given me the ability to name the barriers I have faced, and explain them to others who would usually be unreceptive, for the first time. We cannot underestimate the power of reports like these' [c-v]. Catterall has subsequently been invited to present at a number of workshops at various universities on how the report's recommendations can be implemented and used to reshape teaching and research practice in history.

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

- [a] (i) Testimony: Nigel Whiskin MBE, George Lansbury's great-grandson and President of the GLMT (ii) Poplar Ward Profile 2014 [\[link\]](#) (iii) Portfolio of Media on the Poplar Film Festival [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)
- [b] (i) Testimony: Gill Andrews FSA, HLF mentor on the 'Great Stink' project (ii) Testimony: John Austin, chair of CET 2013-17 (iii) Testimony: Pam Winders, CET Board member (iv) Email: Sir Peter Bazalgette, President of CET
- [c] (i) Testimony: Ammar Azzouz, analyst with Arup Group (ii) Email: Arup Liverpool response (iii) RHS, *LGBT+ Histories and Historians* report and resources [\[link\]](#) (iv) Email: Prof Margot Finn FBA, President of the Royal Historical Society 2016-20 (v) Higher Education Policy Institute, "We're Here: Review of the 'LGBT+ Histories & Historians Report' from the Royal Historical Society" Oct 2020 [\[link\]](#)