

Section A		
Institution: Durham University		
Unit of Assessment: 28 – History		
Title of case study: Citizens and Rebels: Ideas of Citizenship and Practices of Resistance		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Between 2009 and 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Christian D. Liddy	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Late Medieval History, Director of Research, and Deputy Head of Department	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2002-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Between January 2014 and March 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Research on medieval ideas of citizenship informed a series of events marking two recent and related historical anniversaries (the 800th anniversaries of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest) and had impact in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving and challenging public understanding of citizenship and of the place of protest within ideas and practices of citizenship. • Enhancing school education, specifically teaching practice in schools in North-East England teaching 'Power and the People: c1170 to the present day', a new thematic unit on the AQA GCSE History course. • Enriching cultural tourism and the regional economy in North-East England, generated by visitors attending an award-winning exhibition at Palace Green Library (Durham) and an exhibition at Durham Cathedral. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Christian Liddy's research since 2009 has explored the meaning, established the importance, and emphasised the destabilising power, of an urban-based and distinctly vernacular concept of citizenship in late medieval England. The two main research insights, the significance of which extends beyond the period and urban focus of Liddy's research, are:</p> <p>(i) that citizenship is a fluid and contestable category of ideas and practices, which can be a mechanism of control and regulation, yet a source of empowerment and agency, and which can impose duties, yet assert rights.</p> <p>(ii) that citizenship could be a disruptive as well as cohesive force and that debate about citizenship – who has the right to speak and act, and are there limits on what citizens can say and do? – is a principal cause of resistance to authority.</p> <p>Funded by a British Academy Small Research Grant and a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, Liddy's research has sought to reconceptualise citizenship in a particular place and time – English towns between the 13th and 16th centuries – with implications for how we understand citizenship in other historical periods as well as in the present (R1).</p> <p>His research has challenged a deep-rooted narrative: that the late Middle Ages saw the growth and triumph of urban oligarchy, that power was held increasingly in the hands of the few, and that urban elites were able to maintain their dominance through the generation of consensus, which was in part dependent on popular political apathy and political exclusion. The approach</p>		

has been empirical and conceptual: to adopt a closer and more critical reading of town records, which on detailed inspection reveal the existence of multiple forms of contestation that make the 'power' exercised by urban oligarchs less real than imagined; and to study the period through the category of citizenship, which contained within it different, overlapping, and sometimes competing ideas.

Tensions resulted from inherent ambiguities and contradictions within urban citizenship – the relative importance of vertical and horizontal ties of association, the interplay of duties and privileges – and laid a fertile ground upon which criticism and dissent could grow. Conflict in towns arose not from townspeople's exclusion, but from their inclusion, in the structures of power (R2, R3). The active citizen was not necessarily the obedient citizen. The persistence of multiple ideas of citizenship gave a fractious quality to town politics and, when they collided, animated popular resistance and struggle over issues such as freedom of speech (R4) and access to space and common land (R5). In making claims, and defending and asserting rights of access, to land and natural resources, individuals and groups learned to become citizens. Land was a crucible of citizenship.

3. References to the research

R1. (2017) C.D. Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530*, Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780198705208.

R2. (2011) C.D. Liddy, "'Bee war of gyle in borugh": taxation and political discourse in late medieval English towns', in *The Languages of Political Society, Western Europe, 14th -17th Centuries*, ed. A. Gamberini, J.-P. Genet and A. Zorzi, Viella, pp. 461-485. ISBN: 9788883346927.

R3. (2013) C.D. Liddy and J. Haemers, 'Popular politics in the late medieval city: York and Bruges', *English Historical Review*, 128, pp. 771-805. doi: [10.1093/ehr/cet107](https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cet107).

R4. (2017) C.D. Liddy, "'Sir ye be not kyng": citizenship and speech in late medieval and early modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 60, pp. 571-596. doi: [10.1017/S0018246X16000108](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X16000108).

R5. (2015) C.D. Liddy, 'Urban enclosure riots: risings of the commons in English towns, 1480-1525', *Past & Present*, 226, pp. 41-77. doi: [10.1093/pastj/gtu038](https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtu038).

Evidence of quality

C.D. Liddy, 'The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, c.1250-c.1540, British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, 2014-15 (GBP73,193).

C.D. Liddy, 'The City in Late Medieval England: Politics, Space and the Public Sphere', British Academy Small Research Grant, 2009-11 (GBP6,739).

All written outputs were peer-reviewed by leading journals and major academic presses.

4. Details of the impact

1. Improving and challenging public understanding of citizenship

Liddy's research insights about the mutability and radical potential of citizenship benefited the visitors to and audiences of two exhibitions and their accompanying events in 2015 and 2017. They provided both the content and the concept of the *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition, which was held at Palace Green Library (Durham) and which attracted 25,409 visitors over a three-month period (between 1 June 2015 and 31 August 2015). In a year of mostly celebratory events to mark the anniversary, overseen nationally by the Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Commemoration Committee, the 2015 Durham Magna Carta exhibition took a distinctive approach to the charter and the anniversary, which was based fundamentally on Liddy's research. This distinctiveness received national recognition. *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* was the only Magna Carta exhibition on the shortlist for the national 2015 Museums and Heritage Award for Best Temporary or Touring Exhibition, alongside the London V&A Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty exhibition. The VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme 2015 report described how the 'thought provoking' and 'highly memorable' Durham Magna Carta exhibition 'challenged visitors' and concluded that 'It is exceptional to see exhibitions of this standard outside of the capital's national museums' (E1).

Announcing the Gold Award for the Magna Carta exhibition at the 2016 PPRG Marketing Excellence Awards, the Chair of the Publicity and Public Relations Group (PPRG) of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) wrote: 'We loved the fact that you were able to demonstrate the exhibition's ability to change perceptions about citizenship' (E2).

In remembering Magna Carta not as the embodiment of the rule of law but as the consequence of rebellion, the Durham exhibition told a story of 'rebellious citizens' and of the continuing and contemporary struggle about who is, and what it means to be, a citizen. Liddy's research, first developed in relation to the history of the medieval city, was at the core of the introduction and conclusion to the exhibition guidebook that he wrote. Liddy determined the interpretative themes, influenced Studio MB's exhibition design, and guided the choice of objects for display. To ensure active public engagement with his underpinning ideas for the exhibition, he developed a set of questions, which were communicated in a variety of media: from feedback postcards and paper questionnaires, to iPad surveys, a voting interactive, and a sticky note wall. These data sets, coupled with the evidence of social media interaction and digital engagement, were collated to measure the impact of the questions (E3).

The 1,058 comments in the visitor book demonstrated new understanding of the contemporary relevance of the historical themes, which was generated by Liddy's research: 'This [exhibition] has fundamentally changed how I think about citizenship and protest'; '[It has] Made us think about the responsibility of citizenship'; 'Never has the history of our rights in society been so relevant'. 17,498 votes (70% of visitors) were cast in the voting interactive, where visitors were asked to respond to the question: 'For which of your rights as a citizen would you protest?' 45% of the visitors who voted chose 'freedom of speech' (E4). A sticky note wall gave visitors a further opportunity to answer the same question. The 3,920 sticky notes posted onto the wall during the exhibition also enabled visitors to interact with each other (E4). These exchanges were prompted by the exhibition themes and questions that Liddy asked. Visitors shared their own opinions and made their own connections between the past and the present. The original statement, 'If you are human you get human rights. Simple', provoked a reply from another visitor, whose declaration 'The Human Rights Act is everything that is wrong with this country! Only law abiding citizens should have rights' elicited its own response: 'EVERYONE deserves to have their human rights protected.' Two other visitors, who saw the comment, 'Riot if needs be', wrote separately: 'No need for violent protest. Use social media instead', and 'Only the voices of many protestors will reach the ears of government.' The exhibition stimulated political discussion around the relationship between subjecthood and citizenship, the identity of the citizen, and the nature and desirability of protest in defence and pursuit of rights.

Liddy's research on the relationship between landscape and citizenship inspired events in 2017 to mark the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, the charter that gave Magna Carta its name, but that is far less well known. Invited to act as the academic curator of Durham Cathedral's 2017 Open Treasure exhibition, *Magna Carta and Forest Charters* (18,870 visitors), Liddy also appeared on the Radio 4 'Making History' programme (1 August 2017) to explain the historical context and later meaning of the Charter of the Forest. He organized a programme of talks at Durham Cathedral and Palace Green Library in October and November 2017, which paired historians and non-historians to debate topics such as: the depletion of the commons and conflicts about natural resources; the relationship between landscape, memory, and belonging; and the privatisation and control of public space in cities. Speakers included Duncan Mackay, then principal adviser on urban and peri-urban environments for the government agency *Natural England*; Guy Standing, a co-founder of the *Basic Income Earth Network* (BIEN) and an economic adviser to the then Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Rob Cowen, an award-winning writer and author of *Common Ground*.

Liddy's personal invitation to participate in a seminar in the State Rooms, Speaker's House, House of Commons, on 7 November 2017, hosted by the Shadow Chancellor, to discuss the political relevance of the Charter of the Forest in the 21st century is one measure of the impact of his research. The radio audience for the 'Making History' episode on the Charter of the Forest

was approximately 800,000 people, and it had 'a sizeable audience online afterwards', which was 'both global and significant' (E5). Yet it was the series of talks in Durham, which had a local and regional audience, where the impact was deeper and more significant.

The 4 talks in Durham were attended by approximately 200 people, who included key local stakeholders: representatives of The Woodland Trust, the North East England Nature Partnership, educational charities such as the Bernician Studies Group in Northumberland, and local community groups such as the Durham Sheraton Park Residents' Association. 90% of those who completed evaluation questionnaires declared that they had little or no prior knowledge of the Charter of the Forest; 100% of respondents subsequently agreed that the Charter was relevant to contemporary debates about the relationship between rights of citizenship and the natural environment, and many went on to explain the connection: 'We need to preserve citizens' access to land to ensure that the remaining 3 per cent of common land is not destroyed'; '[the Charter of the Forest] reminds people of what being a citizen is, and how you can create change'. Having heard Liddy's own talk, audience members wrote: '[the Charter] inspires me to protect and maintain Durham's commons'; '[it] is relevant to ensure that all citizens have the right to participate in future development, that the government funds this development fully and listens to the decisions, ideas of local people'; '[it] can underpin campaigning ... mobilise society to take ownership of their own land ... [and] tell citizens about their right and arm them with the tools for a better life' (E6). Like the visitors who came to the *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition, the audiences at this series of public talks reflected personally and critically on the nature of citizenship.

2. Enhancing school education

Liddy's underpinning research benefited school children and, more directly, school teachers. The *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition was complemented by a linked programme of education work in schools, which was undertaken by the Palace Green education outreach service. 524 students from local schools at Key Stage 3 participated in the programme, which was structured around a central question arising directly from Liddy's research: 'Is a good citizen always an obedient citizen?' Before the school workshops, 64.5% answered that 'yes', a good citizen is always an obedient citizen; afterwards, 79% answered 'no' to the same question (E3). Among school children, there was a demonstrable shift in attitudes towards citizenship, generated by Liddy's research on the theme of protest and rights.

Liddy's research has also influenced the ways in which school teachers within the region are teaching a new thematic unit on the AQA GCSE History course. 'Power and the People: c1170 to the present day' is about the changing relationship between rulers and ruled in Britain and about the role of protest as an instigator of change. Liddy's engagement with teachers started when he lectured to the Prince's Teaching Institute's History residential (Homerton College, Cambridge, June 2016). He was then invited to deliver 2 CPD sessions to the History Department at Durham Johnston School in 2016 and 2017. With the assistance of the local Specialist Secondary School Adviser for the Humanities (Durham County Council), Liddy organized a CPD workshop in July 2019 for History teachers at 4 schools in County Durham and Tyne & Wear. The schools were drawn geographically from across the region: Bishop Auckland, Durham, Gateshead, and Sunderland. All 4 schools are state schools, and they are half of the small number of state secondary schools in County Durham and Tyne & Wear that currently teach the unit. The 'Power and the People' unit, which covers more than 800 years of history and which has no overarching theme to connect the topics, is highly challenging. It is especially challenging for state schools that are truly comprehensive in their intake and that teach students of mixed ability all the way up to GCSE. To support the CPD workshop, Liddy designed and produced a teacher resource pack, consisting of teachers' notes, exercises, and interactive learning resources for use in the classroom. After the workshop, school teachers adapted the resource pack for use in their own schools (E7).

Participants in the workshop said that Liddy's approach to citizenship had provided a 'hook' which would serve as an 'entry point' to the whole course; that 'it has given me a new, and better, approach to thinking about the course and strategies I can use in order to help the pupils

feel as though they can relate to the subject more'; and that his ideas on the mutable concept of citizenship had served as a narrative 'to tie the themes together', in ways that were likely to 'draw out deeper level thinking'. Subsequent testimonials revealed that the teachers benefited from his 'line of enquiry approach'; that his 'resources and the thinking behind them' supplied the 'missing angle'; and that his guidance on 'having a route in through ideas of citizenship' proved 'very effective'. The Head of History at Durham Johnston School, where Liddy had first tested his ideas for classroom teaching, wrote: the 'Power and the People unit produced the strongest results...in comparison with the other three modules on the course... [due to] an approach we developed primarily upon [Liddy's] consultation' (E8).

3. Enriching cultural tourism and the regional economy

Liddy's research on citizenship and protest determined the approach and shaped the content of two major exhibitions, which were attended by approximately 44,000 members of the public in 2015 and 2017. The *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition alone had an economic impact of over GBP2,400,000 in direct and indirect benefits to the regional economy (E3). 47% of visitors to the exhibition were new visitors to Palace Green Library, and 92% of the total visitors surveyed said that they would visit again. 67% of those surveyed said that they had come to Durham mainly for the exhibition and 71% said that they were more likely to visit the city and region again after coming to the exhibition (E3). The author of the VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme 2015 report noted that, 'When performing a Google search for "Magna Carta exhibitions"' prior to the official visit, Palace Green Library 'appeared third on Google's first page; impressively above Lincoln and Salisbury' (E1). The *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition won 'Tourism Experience of the Year' and a Silver Award for 'Tourism Event of the Year' at the 2015 North East Tourism Awards; it was also highly commended at the 2015 VisitEngland Tourism Awards and shortlisted for the 2016 Times Higher Education Award: Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community. Analysis of the visitor book at the exhibition showed that 46.4% of visitors were from outside the region and that there were visitors from 27 different countries (including the UK) and from 22 different US states (E9). The majority of visitors (53.6%) came from the North East. Their engagement is, perhaps, the most meaningful.

Liddy's project has challenged assumptions about an inclusive and nation-based model of citizenship and embedded a question-led approach within all of its activities, from exhibitions to public talks to work with schools. Its research findings have reached a mixture of local, regional, national, and international audiences, and influenced a diverse range of beneficiaries. Its greatest impact has been in a region with the highest unemployment rate, the lowest level of educational performance, and the lowest household income in the UK, where the issue of citizenship and questions about the identity and role of the citizen could not be more urgent.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- E1. VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme 2015 report on Palace Green Library, with special reference to the *Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt* exhibition.
- E2. Letter from the Chair of the Publicity and Public Relations Group (PPRG) of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), 17 June 2016.
- E3. Evaluation report of the *Magna Carta* exhibition, produced by Culture Durham in May 2016.
- E4. Photographic evidence of visitor voting and sticky notes in the *Magna Carta* exhibition, Palace Green Library, 1 June – 31 August 2015.
- E5. Audience figures (radio and online) for 'Making History' episode, BBC Radio 4, 1 August 2017, supplied in email correspondence by the Series Producer.
- E6. Questionnaire feedback from the series of public talks, 'The Charter of the Forest: Contexts and Conversations', Durham Cathedral and Palace Green Library, October – November 2017.
- E7. 'Power and the People' teacher resource pack, AQA GCSE History, 2019, and co-production of revised resource pack with Whitburn Church of England Academy (Sunderland).
- E8. Evaluations and testimonials from History school teachers (AQA GCSE History), 2019-20.
- E9. Visitor Profile, *Magna Carta* exhibition.