

<b>Institution:</b> York St John University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 28 History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Impact of War on the People of York and Yorkshire in the Twentieth Century: People and Heritage		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000 - 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Christopher Price Dr Alice Brumby	Senior Lecturer Lecturer	1998 - 2001 & 2010 - present 2017 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2019 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>This impact case study engages with the experience of York and Yorkshire in twentieth century war and preparation for war. We have mobilised our published research into the local experience of war and oral history technique to generate impact in a grassroots project enabling local people to come together and engage with their own history. The case study reaches the least advantaged sectors of society and is intergenerational. Our research has also helped to sustain the activities of a major local heritage institution closed to the public by the pandemic.</p> <p>We have created research impact in and through new partnerships with local branches of two national organisations, English Heritage and the Royal Observer Corps Association [ROCA]. Our research has created a major oral history project with ROCA members, now empowered to share and shape their histories and our research has facilitated knowledge transfer between retired ROCA members and young people, positively impacting their educational aspirations in events created for the English Heritage 'Shout Out Loud' initiative.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>The impact of war or the prospect of war on ordinary people is transformative and a social fact of considerable importance involving different approaches from academic historians. Price [3.1] in the first academic article on the subject studied the impact of the 'Baedeker' Air raid on York in 1942, in the context of the development of Air Raid precautions at local level and the public perception of the danger of air attack over preceding decades. This research revealed that as the central government wished to distance itself from the cost of ARP, particularly shelter provision, the safety of the local community depended heavily on the commitment of the population to its own defence, largely because of the massive scale of recruitment required for local ARP services. In the case of York this research suggested that the performance of the community was exceptionally good, but that many lives were lost as result of inadequate shelter provision from central government. This research has informed dialogue with collaborators, primarily the York Cold War Bunker and the Royal Observer Corps Association [ROCA] and identified common and continuous features with the Cold War period.</p> <p>Brumby's research focuses particularly on the mental health of ex-servicemen and the community more widely in World War One and is of particular importance in the context of the response of local communities to the trauma and stresses of war whether combatant or non-combatant. Though an early career researcher, she has accumulated an impressive</p>		

body of published work, and her two chapters in important recent collections with Palgrave are fundamental to this case study. In [3.2] she examines the interaction of the local community in Huddersfield with wounded servicemen in the Huddersfield War Hospital and examines the soldiers and civilian's negotiation of these relationships. The chapter's focus on artistic and cultural responses to war has helped to inform the programme of events with 'Shout Out Loud' and Grimm and Co to help disadvantaged young people to create their own imagined narratives of the Cold War. [3.3] provides an innovative approach to the use of the techniques of oral history. This chapter stresses the importance of oral history methodology for the exploration of the key themes of her research and she is currently building on her earlier work to encompass conflicts within living memory, particularly in the Cold War context, and this has facilitated dialogue with ROCA veterans concerning the stresses of anticipating nuclear war. It has also been central to her work with Shout Out Loud. According to the Youth Participation Officer for Shout Out Loud 'the highlight of this project was the support provided by Alice Brumby from York St John University'. She provided a 'skills-based workshop on the discipline of oral history and interview skills'. This helped, 'not only to develop the participants' knowledge base and skill set but also their confidence to ask questions and undertake interviews. They also found the sessions to be engaging and fun.' [5.2]

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

[3.1] Christopher Price, 'The Political Genesis of Air Raid Precautions and the York Raid of 1942', *Northern History*, Volume XXXVI, October 2000.  
<https://doi.org/10.1179/007817200790177851>

[3.2] Alice Brumby, 'Tommy Talk: War Hospital Magazines and the Cartoons of Resilience and Healing,' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Response to War since 1914: The British Isles, the United States and Australasia*, Ed. Martin Kerby, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). [FINAL MarsandMinerva Tommy Talk.pdf \(yorks.ac.uk\)](#)

[3.3] Alice Brumby, 'The National Schizophrenia Fellowship: Charity, Caregiving and Strategies of Coping, 1960-1980,' in *Healthy Minds in the Twentieth Century: In and Beyond the Asylum*, eds. Steven J. Taylor and Alice Brumby (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27275-3\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27275-3_9)

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

The study began with a public engagement event hosted by York Festival of Ideas designed to share our research about the local community with it. 'Propaganda and the People in Wartime Yorkshire' (08/06/19) was delivered by staff and students presenting their research at undergraduate and postgraduate level to an audience of 60 members of the public. Feedback obtained by questionnaire and email response suggested that perspectives had been changed by the event and offers of assistance with the project from local people keen to interact with our research were received. One of our undergraduate students (now an MA graduate) speaking on the naval attack on Scarborough in WW1 was contacted by a member of the audience who was about to publish a book on parcels for troops made by York confectioners and established a dialogue [5.5].

As a result of this event, a connection was established with the Curator of the York Cold War Bunker, an English Heritage site, who suggested collaborative work with the Royal Observer Corps Association (ROCA) to establish research based on an oral history of the organisation, its place in society and the mental and emotional stresses experienced by civilians during the Cold War. He states that 'the academic rigour and experience brought by Dr Brumby and Dr Price was integral in defining the nature of the proposed research' and that 'the project is underpinned by the experience of Dr Price in twentieth century

political economic and military history and Dr Brumby's experience in social history, specifically her approach to oral history' [5.1].

After meetings with the ROCA chairman and the curator of the Cold War Bunker, a series of events entitled 'Protest and Protect' was organised for June-September 2020, with internal funding secured from English Heritage. This programme was curtailed as face-to-face public events at the Bunker and the University became and remained impossible. We responded by refocusing our collaboration, enabling the University to help the Cold War Bunker maintain its professional links and educational reach by adapting our events to run online in real time. We secured funds to employ a final year undergraduate student under the University's 'Students as Researchers' scheme and staged an online event with the Bunker (17/11/20) at which members of ROCA joined a round table discussion in the context of our research and its relevance to their experience. Thirteen ROCA members participated in the project which built on the research underpinning the case study, exploring the experience of ROCA members and the effects of planning for Armageddon on their lives. All participants agreed to take part in oral history interviews with our student, currently underway [5.3].

The curator suggested a further collaboration with the English Heritage 'Shout out Loud' project, designed to enhance involvement of disadvantaged young people between 11 and 24 in heritage. A double workshop was staged (25/11/20) with Grimm and Co of Rotherham which uses 'creative educational approaches to narrow the gap for marginalised children, young people and adults'. Rotherham is 'a particularly under-resourced part of the UK with some of its boroughs ranking in the bottom 2% on the indices of multiple deprivation scale' [5.4]. This project is the first stage of a creative writing project with the young people, which is designed to boost their confidence and literacy skills. In working with this group, we have engaged with 'a group of young people who would otherwise not have the opportunity/inclination to visit a heritage site' [5.4]. The workshop included our student researcher and produced a discussion with thirteen young people involving our research.

After our workshop on delivery of oral histories, the young people met with ROCA, to ask them about their experiences, enabling knowledge exchange. The Youth Participation Officer for Shout Out loud from English Heritage states that 'The work undertaken by Alice and Dominic gave the youth group the experience of engaging with a higher educational institution. For a group of young people from an under-resourced area with comparatively low levels of school attainment and adult qualifications, this was a fantastic outcome, even more so as the group of 13 includes 4 individuals who are disabled/have additional needs' She added that 'One of these participants who has dyslexia has since mentioned that they are considering applying to study history and/or archaeology at university level. Therefore, the impact of Alice and Dominic's session on the educational aspirations of the group cannot be overstated' [5.2].

Overall, this project is a collaboration between local people and institutions, academic historians, and research students which has achieved research impact in enabling local communities to deepen and develop their understanding of their history and heritage. The Curator of the Bunker states that 'the project has brought together ROCA members with young people from disadvantaged areas who were able to connect with the heritage and lived experience of their region in a way that would not otherwise have happened' [5.1]. The case study has adapted dynamically to circumstances and the Curator of the Bunker notes that 'you have run with this idea and in the midst of everything are making something meaningful happen' [5.4].

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

[5.1] Testimonial: Senior Curator, Collections North, English Heritage.

**[5.2]** Testimonial, Youth Participation Officer (North) for Shout Out Loud, English Heritage.

**[5.3]** Report: Event Feedback & e-mails re ROCA Round Table Event (17/11/20) & Shout Out Loud workshops (25/11/20).

**[5.4]** Correspondence: Senior Curator, Collections North; Youth Participation Officer for Shout Out Loud, English Heritage

**[5.5]** Report: Public questionnaire and feedback from York Festival of Ideas *Propaganda and the People in Wartime Yorkshire* (8/6/19)