

<b>Institution:</b> University of Portsmouth		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 25: Area Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Inspiring local and global citizen researchers: Exploring War and Urban Communities in the First World War		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2005 to 2015		
<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>
Prof. Brad Beaven	Professor of Social and Cultural History	01/09/1994 - date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2013 - 2017		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> <p>Professor Brad Beaven's research findings about citizenship and local patriotism formed the structural basis for exhibitions organised by Portsmouth City Council and the National Museum of the Royal Navy. These formed the centrepieces of their respective First World War centenary commemorations. Drawing on his expertise, these organisations created experiences that reached out to 'hard to access' groups, and 'upskilled' dozens of citizen researchers. Community and online outreach processes drew thousands of adults and children into workshops on historical research and interpretation. Through this, several hundred people were empowered to make direct, active contributions to the expansion of the source-base for the exhibitions, transforming the nature of the events for the organisers. Beaven's expertise on the Battle of Jutland informed the creation of an interactive electronic map, co-produced with the National Museum of the Royal Navy. This map attracted over 1,000,000 visitors within one month of its launch and inspired citizen researchers from around the world to make contributions to the database.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> <p>Beaven, Professor of Social and Cultural History, joined the University of Portsmouth in 1994. His research focuses on the significance of class, gender and empire in British urban popular culture between 1850 and 1945. He has argued through a body of work that a grasp of the changing nature of 'citizenship' in these decades is vital to understand the complexity of civic and popular responses to war-time conditions (R4). By 1900, dissemination of messages about the 'imperial cause' had visibly altered the expressed direction and essence of 'good citizenship', and notions of duty, discipline and sacrifice became key to developing civic politics (R5). Thus, by the start of the Boer War, what Beaven has termed 'local patriotism' was on the rise, a phenomenon geared to enthusing the populace to embrace the imperial message within a familiar civic context (R1).</p> <p>Beaven's work, most fully developed in <i>Visions of Empire: Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City, 1870-1939</i> (R2), identifies the important synergies that grew between a new civic culture of the late nineteenth century and the wider imperial project. The ebb and flow of imperial enthusiasm was shaped by a fusion of local civic pride and a broader imperial identity. That broader culture was neither imposed generically, nor mere background noise, but was instead multi-layered and recast to capture the concerns of a locality (R3).</p> <p>In specific regard to the First World War, the research examined how towns reacted to patriotic calls to enlist, to changing war-time conditions, and to the growing need to mourn the dead. Civic leaders framed war-time citizenship and sacrifice in local terms, and Beaven's work investigated how different social classes and differing generations responded. Portsmouth was one of the 3 key urban case studies in the book. The context of enlistment and the factors which enthused or drove men to enlist formed a substantial part of the Portsmouth City Council 'Lest We Forget' exhibition, as discussed below. Another research theme in the book that would prove impactful was to demonstrate how communities responded to heavy personnel losses. Beaven's research revealed the concerted effort by civic elites and schools to disseminate local role models which enshrined the values of local, national and imperial duty and self-sacrifice.</p> <p>Continued work on the themes of this research has overlapped with Beaven's leadership of the Port Towns &amp; Urban Cultures (PTUC) research group at the University of Portsmouth. Since 2010, PTUC has made an important contribution to understanding ports as liminal places where urban and marine social and cultural spaces converge. Group members have published numerous</p>		

articles and an edited volume, *Port Towns and Urban Cultures* (2016), and are directing the launch of a new international journal, *Coastal Communities* (Sage) in 2021.

A key aim of PTUC has been to bridge the gap between cutting-edge historical investigation and community participation. Thus in 2015 an AHRC-funded project, 'Jutland's National Impact: Civic and Community Responses', investigated the impact of the 1916 Battle of Jutland on British society through the 6,100 sailors killed in the engagement. The project mapped their homes, and demonstrated that communities across the UK were affected by the battle. The PTUC team collaborated with partners from the Portsmouth University of the Third Age (U3A), the National Museum of the Royal Navy and a number of student volunteers, producing a permanent public database of their work (G1 & R6).

### 3. References to the research

(R1) **Beaven, B.**, & Griffiths, J. (2015). The city and imperial propaganda: A comparative study of Empire Day in England, Australia, and New Zealand c. 1903–1914. *Journal of Urban History*, 42(2), 377–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144214566965> This US-based journal is one of the leading international peer-reviewed journals within the field.

(R2) **Beaven, B.** (2012). Visions of empire: patriotism, popular culture and the city, 1870–1939 *Visions of Empire: Popular Culture, Imperialism and the City, 1870–1939*: Manchester University Press, 2012, 2017 edn. This peer-reviewed monograph appeared in MUP's highly acclaimed and influential 'Imperial Studies Series'. The book was positively reviewed in international journals such as *American History Review*, *Urban History*, and *Journal of British Studies*. B. Porter (AHR) noted that as Beaven acknowledges 'there is simply no way of telling how ordinary people received the imperial propaganda that was foisted on them... But Beaven's fascinating book gets us a bit closer'.

(R3) **Beaven, B.** (2009). The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier during the Boer War, 1899–1902: A Study of Local Patriotism. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37(2), 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530903010350>. This peer-reviewed Taylor & Francis journal is an internationally respected forum for the presentation and discussion of recent research in the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth and in comparative European colonial experiences.

(R4) **Beaven, B.**, & Griffiths, J. (2008). Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870–1939. *Contemporary British History*, 22(2), 203–225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13619460701189559>. This peer-reviewed Taylor & Francis journal is one of the leading international research venues in its field. It is an interdisciplinary journal that takes a comparative or transnational approach to contemporary Britain.

(R5) **Beaven, B.** (2005). *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain 1850–1945*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, 2009 edn. This peer-reviewed monograph appeared in MUP's highly-respected 'Studies in Popular Culture' series. The book was positively reviewed in international journals such as *Economic History Review*, *20th Century British History*, and *Cultural and Social History*. Thompson (Institute of Historical Research) noted that 'Beaven has produced a significant and timely contribution to our understanding of popular leisure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'.

(R6) The Battle of Jutland Casualty Database and Interactive Map:  
<http://porttowns.port.ac.uk/source-information/jutland-casualty-database/>

### Research grant funding

(G1) Connelly, M., **Beaven, B.**, Fell, A.S., Brooks, H., Todman, D., Hanna, E.L., Noakes, L. *Co-ordinating Centre-Gateways to the First World War*. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, January 214–December 2016 (GBP13,530)

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Portsmouth City Council (PCC): 'Lest We Forget' exhibition, 2014–15

Beaven's research, showcased through a previous collaboration with PCC (a REF2014 ICS), positioned him as the ideal Guest Curator for this event (S1). PCC had evaluated their heritage provision in 2012, and identified that 'hard to reach' members of the community (notably women,

the younger generation, and those living in more deprived areas) rarely visited museum exhibitions. This was thought to be due to perception that such events were dominated by narrow military histories with little genuine connection to present-day communities. Beaven began work on plans to counter this perception in August 2013, which were successful in attracting GBP110,000 in Heritage Lottery Fund support.

Beaven's research on working-class communities, patriotism, war and loss not only framed the exhibition's display content, but also provided the platform for wider community engagement. Research on civic leaders' strategy of disseminating 'local patriotism' through the formation of the 'Portsmouth Pals' battalion in 1914 was used to highlight a 'hidden history' of the city, and enthused community groups and volunteers to conduct further research on the topic. The physical exhibition ran between June 2014 and January 2015 in the City Museum, and attracted almost 25,000 recorded visitors. In a visitor survey conducted by the Museum, 98% were 'very satisfied or satisfied' with the exhibition. In addition, researchers recorded that visitors spent an average of 62 minutes 'dwell time' engaging with the exhibits (S1), which is almost three times the average benchmarked in a national study (S3).

Developing community-based activities to challenge the notion that the Museum was irrelevant for those who lived in more socially disadvantaged districts was a key element of the exhibition strategy. Built around the key insights of Beaven's research, these were a resounding success. The project recruited and trained 29 volunteers to staff its events and help visitors conduct research in the Museum, and engaged existing community groups who were supported to develop skills in historical investigation and interpreting the past. Almost 50 individuals from five community groups took an active part in contributing in this fashion. To reach out beyond such groups, Beaven led a team of museum professionals and volunteers in running 'history roadshows' in 'hard to reach' neighbourhoods and communities between 2014 and 2015. Running in three schools, three community centres and the City Library, these attracted 2,274 registered participants (S2).

Response to these events was overwhelmingly positive. At King Richard's Secondary School in Paulsgrove, one of Portsmouth's most deprived areas, teacher Abigail Deadman reported that the pupils *'really engaged with it'* and that activity had reached beyond the confines of the school and *'snowballed into a community event'* (S4). Beaven's research on the home front was the foundation for pupils to engage in a variety of activities from initial historical research, to writing and staging a play and film (S4). Pupils reported that history was *'like a real thing'* and that they now had a *'more emotional'* connection to the past (S4).

Beaven's material informed workshops on the methods of researching historical sources for everyday life during the War. There was a strong focus on upskilling in research, writing, project management and engaging with digital media; abilities that enhance employability and general well-being. Participants, who previously had little engagement with the museum and archive services, reported significant benefits. For example, survey respondent 'Micha' commented that *'I became more confident in talking to people and using digital archives. I have improved my research and communication skills'*. 'Lydia' noted that *'I feel more comfortable in a museum environment and have learned what it takes to work in one'*. 'Kay' wrote *'I have enjoyed being in the museum. I feel very connected to the objects and the people. Visitors have become quite emotional when we have done research with them on their relatives'*. Kay's engagement with the project was the stimulus for her to write a play and become part of the Beddow Library community group (S2).

These examples of cultural enrichment and 'citizen research' generated audio, theatre, film and text which contributed to the Museum gallery and associated website. The website facilitated the opportunity for individuals to 'upskill' and become citizen researchers. It allowed participants to listen to Beaven's podcast on the 'Portsmouth Pals', watch videos on 'how to research' and upload their own contribution to the project. In total, 55,700 people engaged through digital media (S2).

Beaven's material further underpinned an online 'citizen researcher toolkit' which advised individuals how to get started on historical research and offered advice and guidelines on how archival research could be conducted (S5). The toolkit was downloaded by 111 researchers in a 6 month period (S2). The museum greatly benefited, as citizen researchers have so far contributed over 200 additional verified stories to the website. As a permanent component of the Museum's

profile, the website enables the public to engage with Portsmouth's experience of the First World War, and continues to provide the opportunity to learn how to research archives through the resources it supports (S6).

### **National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN): Jutland Exhibition, 2016**

Beaven's contribution to the 'blockbuster' GBP1,000,000 exhibition on the Battle of Jutland for its centenary year (S7) continued and developed the impact achieved in the project above. NMRN leadership identified the crucial value of Beaven's research, both to highlight the nationwide reach and significance of the battle's casualties, and to explore and illustrate the impact of such casualties on communities. The database developed by PTUC formed the foundation for the digital map and exhibition.

According to [text removed for publication], the exhibition curator, *'Working with the university enabled NMRN to take the Jutland interactive map concept to a whole new level. Something which started life as a limited attempt to try and plot those who died in the battle and came from Portsmouth... became an extraordinarily ambitious national effort to record everyone who took part. This would quite simply have been impossible without the university's dedicated researchers, and the impressive set of skills and relationships they brought with them'* (S8).

Beaven's team and the NMRN co-produced a new digital map that identified the sailors' home towns and appealed to the public to contribute stories, photographs, and the names of sailors who survived the battle. This co-production process itself produced further impactful benefits. Beaven initiated research workshops for volunteers and community groups that enhanced their computer skills in helping them create and use digital maps. This was particularly embraced by the Portsmouth University of the Third Age group, who built on their involvement with the City Council exhibition (above), and through a series of computer workshops in 2015/16 were enabled to move from basic research to a range of new abilities. They reported that they had *'developed skills in interpreting archive material'* and learned new skills within the digital humanities through the creation of digital maps. This experience gave them the confidence to successfully bid for their own HLF community project worth over GBP7,900 (S7).

The Jutland interactive electronic map has had global reach. Its launch attracted significant media coverage, and the site was visited by over 1,000,000 people in its first month of operation (S9). It remains in operation, and allows participants to upload stories, photographs and documents to the site. To date, the NMRN has received over 700 additional public contributions to the database, and covers entries from Montreal to Chennai, Islamabad to Istanbul, Savannah, Georgia to Venice, Italy. This resource is now a permanent part of the museum's collection and outreach resources, and alongside the similar permanent online presence of the City Museum exhibition, ensures that the research of Beaven and PTUC continues to have impact into the future.

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

(S1) PCC letter corroborating 'Lest we Forget' HLF funding and Exhibition (2014)

(S2) Lest We Forget Project:- Final Evaluation Report (2015)

(S3) M. Davies and C. Heath, 'Increasing the Impact of Summative Evaluation in Museums and Galleries', Kings College London Report, November 2013.

(S4) Video of Discover the Lest we Forget project by Cass Productions ["Discover the Lest we forget project by Cass productions"](#)

(S5) Video of the Community "toolkit" providing advice and guidance for groups embarking upon their own research by Cass Productions [Video: The community toolkit](#)

(S6) A Tale of one city community website <http://www.ataleofonecity.portsmouth.gov.uk/first-world-war-centenary/>

(S7) HLF article with U3A on the new skills and knowledge they had gleaned (2017)

(S8) Communication from Exhibition Curator, National Museum of the Royal Navy (03/10/16)

(S9) *Daily Mail*, 23 February 2016 & Nautoguide NMRN case study report (2019)