

<b>Institution:</b> University of Dundee		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 28 History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping Centenary Commemorations: Dundee and the First World War.		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2006-16		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  William Kenefick	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Senior Lecturer	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>  1994-2016
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-19		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		

### 1. Summary of the impact

Research in the History unit on Scotland and the First World War, funded by the AHRC, had interrelated impacts on cultural production, public understanding, and commemoration during the centenary years of the war. The research helped to shape the national media's centenary coverage, enhanced public awareness of the war's local effects on Dundee city, and influenced the experience of remembrance both locally and nationally. The impacts were achieved through the organisational framework of the Great War Dundee Commemoration Project (2012-19), which itself was a direct consequence of the research and was coordinated by staff in the History unit.

### 2. Underpinning research

The main research which underpinned the impact was William Kenefick's work on the history of the labour movement in Scotland. The core research was carried out during the early 2000s, supported by AHRC-funded leave (2006), published in monograph form by Edinburgh University Press in 2007, and further developed thereafter. The research widened the scope of historical inquiry into its subject matter by showing how radical labour politics were important not only in the west of Scotland – a long-unchallenged assumption -- but across the country. In the process, the research uncovered extensive information about the impact of the First World War in Scotland, notably on labour politics, war resistance and conscientious objection. The monograph provided the first comprehensive account of Scottish war resisters, as well as the key role played by the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in the anti-war movement. It charted conscientious objection across Scotland, alongside specific case studies of anti-war community action in Aberdeen and Dundee. One of its key findings was that Dundee was 'a leading centre of the anti-war movement' [R1, p. 152].

Between 2007 and 2016, when he retired, Kenefick developed his research on the impact of the First World War on Dundee (the additional findings were published in 2018 and 2019 but the research was completed by Kenefick before retirement). He showed how support for radical political groups had accelerated during the war even before the Russian Revolution [R3, R4], and confirmed Dundee's 'special status' as a centre of the anti-war movement [R2, pp. 85-6]. These developments were largely due to the activities of a cadre of war resisters, including the leading labour activist and trade unionist E. G. Carr, president of the Dundee Labour Representation Committee and Scottish secretary of the ILP Scouts [R4]. Carr's role in the formation of the Dundee Joint Committee Against Conscription in January 1916, an organisation found nowhere else in Scotland, was of crucial importance. The post-war political impact of these developments was reflected in the 1922 General Election when

Winston Churchill (Liberal member for Dundee) was defeated by the anti-war and anti-conscription candidates Edwin Scrymgeour and E. D. Morel.

### 3. References to the research

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[R1] Kenefick, W. (2007) *Red Scotland! The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c. 1872 to 1932* Edinburgh: University Press DOI: [10.3366/Edinburgh/9780748625178.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.3366/Edinburgh/9780748625178.001.0001)

[R2] Kenefick, W., (2018) 'The Impact of War and Revolution – Dundee 1914-1918' in *Tayside at War*, Kenefick, W. and Patrick, D. (eds.) Dundee: Abertay Historical Society, pp. 85-95.

[R3] Kenefick, W. (2018) 'Scottish War Resisters and Conscientious Objectors, 1914-1919' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914. The British Isles, the United States and Australasia*, Martin Kerby, M., Baguley, M. and McDonald, J. (eds.) Cham: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 291-307. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-319-96986-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96986-2)

[R4] Kenefick, W. and Dukes, P. (2019) 'The Scottish Radical Left in Aberdeen and Dundee: The Impact of the Great War and Russian Revolution' in *The Global Impacts of Russia's Great War and Revolution. Book 2: The Wider Arc of Revolution, Part 2*, Chatterjee, C., Marks, S. G., Neuburger, M. and Sabol, S. (eds.) Indiana: Slavica, pp. 87-114.

#### Research quality

The research for Kenefick's monograph was supported by peer-reviewed funding from the AHRC (research leave grant, 2006). Reviewers described the book as 'the culmination of an impressive amount of archival research' (*English Historical Review*, cxxv, 515, August 2010, p. 1024); 'One of the strongest chapters covers the continued hostility to Britain's involvement in the First World War [...] and the extent of resistance to conscription' (*History: Journal of the Historical Association*, vol. 94, issue 313, January 2009, p. 121); 'His two chapters on the Scottish left's response to the Great War and the Russian Revolution [...] are extremely effective' (*The Kelvingrove Review*, issue 2). The research has also been recognised by the leading historian of conscientious objection in Britain, Cyril Pearce, whose definitive book about war resistance in Britain during the First World War confirms and utilises Kenefick's argument about the importance of Dundee as one of Britain's war resister communities (*Communities of Resistance*, Francis Boutle Publishers, 2020, pp. 24, 139, 160-64, 513-15).

### 4. Details of the impact

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The underpinning research generated interrelated impacts on cultural production, public understanding, and commemoration during the centenary years of the First World War. The impacts can be demonstrated by focusing on the direct beneficiaries of the research: (1) national media, whose centenary coverage was informed and shaped by it; (2) people in Dundee who gained enhanced understanding of the war's impact on the city. The reach of the impact was primarily local, but it also resonated nationally through its use by the media. Its significance lay in its provision of original historical knowledge for First World War commemorative activities, and in the ways it enabled a specific community to critically reflect upon and understand the conflict's impact in that locality.

#### National media

The research was used by the BBC in its centenary coverage. For example, the BBC Radio Scotland series 'World War One at Home' included a 2014 broadcast about the 'Glasgow Green Peace Protest' of August 1914, the biggest anti-war demonstration to occur in 1914. The producer confirmed that Kenefick's 'knowledge of the Scottish labour movement was

key to telling the reasons behind the demonstration' [E1]. The research on Dundee's position as a centre of war resistance featured in a BBC iWonder guide (2016) entitled 'Why was Dundee anti-war in WWI?' The producer confirmed that the guide 'would have been nowhere near as wide-ranging, were it not for [Kenefick's] expertise... he brought a part of Dundee's history which might not have been all that well known to wider public awareness' [E1].

The research also shaped the commemorative content of the Scottish newspaper *The Courier*. Published in Dundee, the newspaper has a circulation of between 35,000 and 45,000. Between 2014 and 2019 it published two First World War commemorative supplements per annum (issued free with the newspaper). The editor of the supplements confirmed that Kenefick 'made a huge contribution... Topics ranged from the hidden story of Dundee's war resisters and Conscientious Objectors, and the story of the Carr brothers ... to the impact of the Russian Revolution on life in Scotland' [E2]. Kenefick, along with colleague Derek Patrick who also contributed to the supplements, was included in the newspaper's annual 'Impact List' of the region's 100 most influential people for 2014. Both were also included in the 2018 list and cited for their 'massive contribution to The Courier's special commemorative First World War supplements over the past four years' which 'helped to bring the momentous events of 100 years ago to today's audience' [E3].

#### Public understanding and commemoration

The research, which highlighted the distinctive experience of Dundee as a centre of war resistance, led Kenefick to establish the Great War Dundee Commemorative Project (GWD) which ran from 2012-19. The GWD partnership, chaired by Kenefick, involved 18 local organisations, including the Black Watch Museum, DC Thomson, Dundee City Council and the Western Front Association. It raised awareness of how the First World War affected Dundee and its environs, partly through its organisation of major events in the city, including a two-day BBC televised commemoration of the war's outbreak in August 2014, which attracted more than 10,000 visitors [E4, p. 37], and a collaboration with the Scottish Government's Commemorations Panel to host the national commemoration of the Battle of Loos in September 2015. The chair of the Panel, Norman Drummond, commented that the Loos commemorative event was 'consummately judged' and 'attended by a packed and appreciative full house [in the Caird Hall, Dundee]' and 'with thousands watching on specially erected screens in Dundee' [E5].

GWD also enabled local people to research the war's impact on their city, using the underpinning research as a framework. For example, in 2018, with the support of a Heritage Lottery Fund award received by the GWD partnership, Community and Young Ambassadors were recruited to research the local legacies and 'hidden histories' of the war. A total of fourteen GWD workshops were held involving 79 young people. This work resulted in the publication of *Great War Dundee: Hidden Histories* (2019), a booklet collection of original papers produced by the ambassadors. GWD printed 2500 copies of the booklet, the majority of which were distributed to Dundee's fourteen community libraries and eight secondary schools [E6]. One participant in the project was 'astounded by the new things I have learnt about the First World War' [E10, p. 21]. With the help of community volunteers (numbering almost 30), GWD also organised a pop-up exhibition, *The Home Front*, which toured the fourteen community libraries. It also digitised and expanded the Dundee Roll of Honour (made available online at the GWD website).

The research also inspired a special comic as part of the 'hidden histories' project, *Great War Dundee* (2019), another example of its impact on cultural production. The comic featured a story, 'Ragtime Soldier', by the prominent comic creator Pat Mills, which drew upon Kenefick's work [E7]. It built on Mills' acclaimed *Charley's War* and explores the war's impact on Dundee. Audience members at the launch event at V&A Dundee remarked that the comic was 'a great way of more people accessing their history'. One attendee was 'inspired to explore'; another commented that they had been unaware of the extent of

conscientious objection in Dundee; another 'did not realise the level of resistance to the war prior to the event' [E8]. Five hundred copies of the comic were printed for free distribution; it was also made available on Pat Mills' website and by November 2020 had been downloaded 1,520 times [E11].

The research also had an impact on the professional practice of curators. Dundee's art gallery and museum, the McManus, used Kenefick's work to contextualise a unique First World War exhibit when it acquired a collection of artefacts belonging to the conscientious objector E. G. Carr (which formed a museum display). The McManus Curator of Social History stated that 'the significance of this collection was instantly recognised' thanks to Kenefick's research, which formed the basis of the information that accompanied the exhibit. The curator further confirmed that, 'Overall because of the GWD project we have a much more thorough understanding of our collections relating to the First World War, which allows us to use those objects in events and exhibitions and improve our cultural offering to the people of Dundee and its visitors' [E9].

The research, therefore, reached beyond the academic community to produce a range of impacts on different stakeholders, and in particular to enhance public understanding and commemoration of the First World War in Dundee.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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[E1] Correspondence from BBC producer.

[E2] Correspondence from *The Courier* First World War supplements editor.

[E3] *The Courier* 'Impact 100' list, 6 December 2018, p.6.

[E4] Leisure & Culture Dundee, annual report 2014/15.

[E5] Great War Dundee endorsement letter from Chair of the Scottish Commemorations Panel, 6 November 2015.

[E6] Correspondence from Great War Dundee project officer (2018-19), 1 April 2020.

[E7] *Great War Dundee* comic.

[E8] Audience feedback from launch of *Great War Dundee* comic, 20 September 2019.

[E9] Correspondence from McManus Curator of Social History, 13 February 2020.

[E10] Great War Dundee Heritage Lottery Fund report (2019).

[E11] Confirmation of download figures 27 November 2020.