

Institution: University of Bolton		
Unit of Assessment: 32, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: A Festival of Worktown: Using local archives to achieve cultural policy objectives through community arts engagement		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: March 2010 – December 2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Donna Claypool	Senior Lecturer in Art and Design	10.11.1997 - present
Dr. Robert Snape	Professor of Cultural History	01.09.2003 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2019 -July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Research on Mass Observation's Worktown study of Bolton and on local textile archives enabled cultural organisations in Bolton to increase participation in the arts. Research-led workshops supported under-represented women associated with Bolton Council's Community Arts projects in creating and exhibiting a display of textile designs and performing a short drama based on the Worktown archive at the University's online Festival of Worktown. Their reported enhanced subjective well-being contributed to Bolton Council's strategic objective of enhancing identification with place through culture. The Worktown research also engaged other public and voluntary organisations as artistic collaborators in the Festival celebrations.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Uniquely, Bolton's local history includes Mass Observation's 'Worktown' project 1937-1940, which chose Bolton for its study of everyday life in a northern town. In his paper on northernness and leisure, Snape (2016) explored the everyday life of the inter-war cotton industry in Bolton, demonstrating how female cotton operatives were not limited to a passive consumption of leisure but were active producers of communal activities that formed a collective consciousness and a sense of social and cultural identity. Worktown records of ephemeral and seemingly mundane activities revealed women's construction of an informal leisure life within work. They became historical actors, exhibiting agency in leisure as both producers and consumers by subverting imposed cultural rules and re-appropriating spaces organised by others for different purposes.</p> <p>Snape disseminated this research on women cotton workers to the women's group 'Cotton Queens' in collaboration with fellow researcher, Donna Claypool, who had also been working with the Bolton museum archives. One of the distinctive insights of Claypool's research was her discovery that several pattern books in Bolton textile archive were accompanied by original designs, revealing the working practices of designers for industry. Drawing from Snape's (2010) research on industrial collections in municipal museums, Claypool's research focused on the meaning of these patterns and their potential for creative reinterpretation. This informed her major curated exhibition 'Making Textiles: History > Identity > Innovation in Bolton Museum 24 January to 23 February (2019) and her journal article 'An Archive Collection for Collaborative Partnership and Pedagogic Textile Practice' (2020).</p>		

Snape's (2018) monograph investigated an overlooked historical discourse of leisure and culture in British social policy debate. He showed that John Ruskin and William Morris believed that a renaissance of art would bring social as well as individual benefits. Leisure was necessary to the enjoyment of art. As Morris stated, it was through leisure that workers could do direct good to the community by creating art through occupation; 'true' leisure was active, not passive. Social philosophers blended Morris' claim for leisure as a sphere of artistic production with Thomas Hill Green's social idealism to promote an Aristotelian leisure of mental cultivation. One of Snape's distinctive insights was that their ideas influenced voluntary action organisations, initially the social and university settlements, which adopted leisure as a field of engagement and a sphere of intellectual growth, distinct from hedonistic pleasure. Toynbee Hall, for example, mounted art exhibitions to which local people were invited. In post-First World War social reconstruction John Hobson and Cecil Delisle Burns revisited Morris and Green to argue for a democratically distributed leisure in which ordinary people would become producers as well as consumers of art and culture. According to Delisle Burns, their agency in leisure would establish new standards of art and culture that would produce a 'new kind of community' independent of a leisure class. Examples include the Ashington painters, the arts groups of the Clarion movement and the Workers' Theatre movement.

This research provoked the idea of a public engagement intervention that would help socially excluded people, especially women, to produce a collective art that might enhance their social and cultural self-identity.

3. References to the research

1. Claypool, D. (2019) *Making Textiles: History>Identity>Innovation* iv.Exhibition Bolton Museum, 24 January to 23 February. [Listed in REF 2]
The preview of the show corresponded with the opening of the Fashion and Textiles Association Futurescan4 'Valuing Practice' conference, held over two days at the University of Bolton.
2. Claypool, D.(2020) 'An Archive Collection for Collaborative Partnership and Pedagogic Textile Practice', *Journal of Textile Design Research and Practice*, 8:1, 24-45, DOI: 10.1080/20511787.2019.1637695 [Published online 6th November 2019]
ii. journal article
[This was a peer-reviewed article in a leading journal in the textile design field]
3. Snape, R. (2010) 'Objects of utility: cultural responses to industrial collections in municipal museums 1845-1914', *Museum and Society*. 8(1) 18-36.
ii. journal article
[This was a peer-reviewed article in a prestigious journal].
4. Snape, R. (2016) 'Everyday leisure and Northernness in Mass Observation's Worktown 1937-1939', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 20:1, 31-44, DOI: 10.1080/14797585.2015.1134058 [Listed in REF 2]
ii. journal article
[This article was written at the invitation of Professor Karl Spracklen, editor of this special issue on the theme "Northernness, Northern Culture and Northern Narratives". Prof. Spracklen acknowledged Snape's leading knowledge in the field.]
5. Snape, R. (2018) *Leisure, Voluntary Action and Social Change in Britain 1880-1939*, i.book London: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978-1-3500-0301-9. [Listed in REF 2]
Darryl Leeworthy, *Twentieth Century British History*, 30 (4), 2019, 607-609, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1093/tcbh/hwy025> commented: 'The great value of Robert Snape's new book lies in its historical theorization of leisure as an agent of social change'. It is 'an effective, stimulating volume that will serve to prompt (it is to be hoped) a reconsideration of leisure and voluntary action as political forums in early twentieth-

century Britain'. Review, Darryl Leeworthy, *Twentieth Century British History*, 30 (4), 2019, 607–609, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1093/tcbh/hwy025>; Colin Rochester, co-founder of the Voluntary Action Society, described this book as a 'major contribution to the historiography of voluntary action', noting 'Anyone with an interest in understanding voluntary action – and not just its history – will find that Bob Snape has contributed an important new dimension to its study'. <https://www.vahs.org.uk/about-2/blog/> Ian R Lamond, *Leisure Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/02614367.2020.1757135 <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1757135> commented: 'A remarkable piece of work; one that will be a valuable resource for academic researchers and students, interested in the social history of leisure in Britain, for some time.'

4. Details of the impact

The common locus of Claypool's and Snape's research was Bolton/Worktown. Impact on public understanding was achieved by the dissemination of research through an online Festival of Worktown presented by the University's Centre for Worktown Studies on 14 July 2020 [<https://www.boltonschoolofthearts.co.uk/worktown-festival-programme>]. The overall impact of the Festival was to re-connect the public of Bolton to the Worktown study in support of the Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy objective of enhancing identification with place through culture. This was achieved through engaging members of the public and voluntary organisations in Bolton to present their own research on Worktown through the arts. The beneficiaries of the research were Bolton Museum, Bolton Council Community Arts, women in the Council's community arts "Wonder Woman" group and Bolton University of the Third Age. The nature of impact varied across these beneficiaries.

Claypool's research on the historical textile design patterns held by Bolton Museum was shared with the 'Wonder Woman' community arts project in five sessions over a four week period (October–November 2019) (5). Snape's research on Worktown was also shared with this group through a series of workshops in Bolton Museum, where the group members were introduced to the Mass Observation Worktown Collection and the Humphrey Spender Worktown Photographic Collection (August–October, 2019) (2). Using these three archives, the women researched the lives of Bolton's female cotton factory operatives.

Bolton Museum benefited through the public interest in these archives. Sam Elliot, Head of Service at the Museum described the Centre for Worktown Studies as a "hugely valuable mechanism for promoting access to and the use of the museum's Worktown Collection of photographs by Humphrey Spender" (1). She identified the festival as one amongst many activities which testify to the "close working relationship between academic staff at the University and the curatorial team at the museum, fostered by the Centre" (1).

The impact on the women in the "Wonder Woman" group was the enhancement of their subjective well-being. Women typically referred to this community group report poor mental and physical health, feelings of isolation and low self-esteem (5). Claypool and Snape delivered Saturday morning learning sessions at the Museum, introducing this group to the textiles and Worktown archives and encouraging the women to re-interpret these through their own work in design and historical interpretation. Their resulting designs and textiles were later included in the Worktown Festival in 2020 and displayed to the public. The woman formed a sub group, The 'Cotton Queens', so called after the historical Cotton Queen competition of the Lancashire cotton industry. The Cotton Queens also wrote and produced a play, *Spinning Tales* which they performed at the Festival of Worktown. Sam Elliot said that this was one of the 'highlights' of the festival (1). A recording was also broadcast at a local hospital (3).

Comments from the participants emphasized a sense of belonging and a renewed connection to place:

'I've always felt a little bit "foreign" and homesick for a place I couldn't go back to...Now, with all I've learned about "Worktown" I feel like I belong' (2).

'I have enjoyed meeting different people. We have talked about our lives and formed friendships [...] and learnt more about the cotton industry and the history of the town where I have lived all my life' (2).

'Cotton Queens has given me many new friendships as well as a sense of purpose. From this small group of women I have gained a greater sense of belonging to the wider community of Bolton' (2).

One participant commented on how it had 'gone from an 18 week project to "whoever knows how long" project' (2) and spoke with enthusiasm about presenting the group work at Bolton Museum.

The impact on Bolton Council's Community Arts Team was to fulfil the Greater Manchester policy objective of enhancing identification with place. Gaynor Cox, Arts Officer, described how 'the Cotton Queens project inspired the women to such an extent that a number of them continued their research outside the project. Three of the participants were applying for degree courses. This demonstrates the positive effect that this project, and the "Worktown" research, has had on this group — confidence, skills development, social benefit, educational, health and wellbeing' (4). Christine Fitton, UCAN Project Office, Bolton at Home, expressed the impact on the group thus: 'The partnership with the University has provided the group with access to high quality learning and creative engagement projects, alongside new insights to the value of the local historical resources contained within the archives to local people' (5).

The impact on the University of the Third Age, a participating organisation in the Festival, was summarised by its Chair, Tony Pearson, as the most 'tangible proof' of the active encouragement for learning and research' for its members by university staff on a continuing basis. 'In particular, the university has reached out to U3A, as an important community player, to provide talks by university staff, access to exhibitions, and opportunities for U3A interest groups to work alongside academics on specific projects. The Worktown Festival project [...] has allowed four different Bolton U3A interest groups – Local History; 'Stitch and Craft'; Digital Photography and 'Art Creators' – to contribute collective work over a period of months to a very worthwhile research initiative' (6). The U3A Stitch and Craft group noted how 'staff members from Bolton University were valuable collaborators in developing our project. We were delighted that the group's work and commitment was able to be showcased, it was a new and successful experience for all of us' (7, 8).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Impact statement by Samantha Elliott, Head of Service, Bolton Library and Museum Services on the benefits to Bolton Museum of its the partnership with the Centre for Worktown Studies. E-mail: samantha.elliott@bolton.gov.uk [Provides evidence of the impact of the UoA's Worktown research on public engagement with the archive].
2. *Spinning Tales: A Celebration of Worktown by 21st Century Cotton Queens*. Edited by Brid Andrews, Kathryn Thomasson, Sandra Nicol, and Gaynor Cox. Bolton: Centre for Worktown Studies, 2020, ISBN 978-0-9929770-3-0. PDF Also available as hard copy. [Provides pictorial record of workshops, study visits and associated highlights from the 18 week project and detailed testimonials from 12 of the participants].
<https://www.worktownfestival.com/cotton-queens> .
3. Recorded presentation by the various stakeholders and participants involved in the Cotton Queens project at the Festival of Worktown, 14 July 2020
<https://www.worktownfestival.com/cotton-queens> [Provides evidence of the impact of the research-led engagement on Bolton at Home's community arts development].
4. Impact statement by Gaynor Cox, Housing Arts Officer, Bolton at Home [Provides evidence of the benefits to Bolton Council of the partnership with the Centre for

Worktown Studies and also the perceived impact on the participants in the Cotton Queens project, particularly in terms of their well-being and skills development].

5. Impact Statement by Christine Fitton, UCAN Project Officer, Bolton at Home. [Provides evidence of the benefits of Claypool's sharing of research on textiles design and on the Centre for Worktown Studies' demonstration of the relevance of the Worktown archive as a relevant and accessible resource for local people and their families to explore today].
6. Impact statement Tony Pearson, Chair of Bolton University of the Third Age. [Provides evidence of the benefits to the U3A of collaborative research on the Worktown Archive through the Centre for Worktown Studies].
7. Impact statement by Mary Corcoran and Serena Johnson, members of the U3A Stitch and Craft Group and presenters of the "Washing Line' textiles installation at the Festival of Worktown. [Provides evidence of the impact of positive research collaboration with members of the public and university staff].
8. Recorded presentations from the festival <https://www.worktownfestival.com/recordedpresentations> [Provides evidence of the extent to which public and voluntary organisations were engaged with the festival as research collaborators].