

Institution: University of Wolverhampton		
Unit of Assessment: 28 History		
Title of case study: Using History to Transform the Education Curriculum of the General Federation of Trade Unions' (GFTU)		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2020		
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:
Professor Keith Gildart	Professor of Labour and Social History	2004-Present
Professor Andrew Perchard	Professor in UWBS and Head of Management Research Centre	2019-2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Our impact has been to transform the education programme of the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). This work, underpinned by historical research from the University of Wolverhampton, has now reached all 200,000 union members across 25 organisations, enhancing both their personal development and career progression. Impact is evidenced through a major shift in the GFTU's policy, which saw the inclusion of labour and social history in the organisation's four educational principles. These principles underpin all training offered to its affiliated organisations, such as the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), the Musicians' Union (MU), the Bakers', Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), and the Social Workers' Union (SWU). The research and associated outputs have provided a robust yet accessible understanding of the history of the trade union movement, labour politics, and working class culture. This has enabled the GFTU to learn from historical precedents to adapt to changing economic and social contexts and enhanced its professional identity and purpose.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>The underpinning research is grouped under the three thematic headings and detailed below, with relevant references to outputs indicated [R]:</p> <p><u>Labour Biography</u></p> <p>Gildart's research has provided accounts of the lives and experiences of key figures in the labour and trade union movement from the period of the industrial revolution through to the present day. The research has demonstrated the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of the labour movement, the contribution of women, and neglected political traditions such as communism, syndicalism, spiritualism, and trotskyism in shaping workplace and community activism. It has also uncovered the changing methods of political organisation, activism, trade union advocacy and education across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most importantly the research has recovered and contextualised histories of working class communities, identities, beliefs and currents often marginalised in earlier studies of the role of the labour and trade union movement in British society.</p>		

This work was disseminated by research published in multiple volumes of the *Dictionary of Labour Biography* co-edited by Gildart [R1-2].

Music and Deindustrialisation

Gildart's research in this area has established the relationship between working-class youth culture, the workplace, community, trade unionism, popular music and socio-economic continuity and change in the period 1955-1976. This work shows how popular music reflected and shaped working-class experiences, culture, and the politics of the trade union movement in a period in which a number of communities were impacted by a rapidly developing process of deindustrialisation. Gildart has uncovered the links between deindustrialisation, class identities, popular music (such as Northern Soul) and the decline of trade unionism in the 1980's and the 1990's. This research was disseminated through R3, R4 and R6.

Coal Mining

Gildart's and Perchard's research placed managerial trade unionism in the British coal industry within the wider context of the changing nature of mining communities and the growth of white-collar trade unions in post-war Britain. It produced oral histories of miners that have preserved their memories and informed public knowledge of the workplace, communities, trade unionism, class and identity in British society. The dissemination of this work has forged new directions in mining history regarding the relationship between the National Union of Mineworkers, government, managers and individual miners and communities. The research on managerial trade unionism in coal mining has made a notable intervention in re-thinking industrial relations in the coal industry in the period of public ownership from 1947-1994 [R5].

Knowledge Exchange and Research Collaboration

The research and collaboration between the University of Wolverhampton and the GFTU emanates from three substantial projects: The Dictionary of Labour Biography; Coal, Community and Class in Britain 1947-1994; and Popular Music and Deindustrialisation in Post-War Britain. The Dictionary project [R1-2] was first established in the 1960s and has been led by Gildart since 1999. It has gained a global reputation as a major resource for historians of labour, trade unions and socialist organisations. Its impact outside of the academy has been significant and its contribution to knowledge inspired the GFTU to overhaul its educational ethos and place labour and social history at the centre of its programmes of study. This led to further substantial and sustained collaboration between the GFTU and historians at Wolverhampton on projects on former coal communities [R5]. The history of the British coal industry has featured in weekend schools, workshops, conferences and courses offered by the GFTU. The Popular Music and Deindustrialisation project [R3-4 and R6] also generated collaboration between the GFTU and its affiliated organisations, including the MU and SWU. Such collaboration has led to the organisation of a Festival of Youth, an annual Radical Summit, weekend schools and special events where the link between music, work, and class had been discussed and debated by representatives from the GFTU, the MU, the PFA, the BFAWU, and the SWU.

3. References to the research

The following research outputs have been through a rigorous peer-review process. Evidence of peer-reviewed funding connected to the research is also set out below.

R1. Keith Gildart and David Howell (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol. XIV* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

R2. Keith Gildart and David Howell (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol. XV* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

R3. Stephen Catterall and Keith Gildart, *Keeping the Faith: A History of Northern Soul* (Manchester University Press, 2020). (REF 2 Output)

R4. Keith Gildart, 'Class, Youth and Dirty Jobs: The Working-Class and Post-War Britain in Pete Townshend's Quadrophonia', in Pamela Thurschwell (ed) *Quadrophonia and Mod(ern) Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 85-118.

R5. Andrew Perchard and Keith Gildart, "Running with the Fox and the Hounds": Managers in the British Coal Industry", *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 39 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.3828/hsir.2018.39.3> (REF 2 Output)

R6. Stephen Catterall and Keith Gildart, 'Did Wigan Have a Northern Soul?', in B. Lashua, S. Wagg, K. Spracklen and M. S. Yavuz (eds), *Sounds and the City Volume 2* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 369-387.

Grants

The collaboration between historians at Wolverhampton and the GFTU was formalised by a successful funding bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AHRC supported the research underpinning the project titled 'On Behalf of the People: Work, Community, and Class in the British Coal Industry 1947-1996' with a grant of £655,000. A further project, 'New Directions in Coal Mining History and Heritage in Japan and the UK', has been supported by the ESRC with a grant of £43,484. The role of history in GFTU education was also confirmed by the creation of a specific PhD studentship in Labour History, supervised at Wolverhampton by Professor Gildart.

4. Details of the impact

I1. Influencing the design and delivery of the curriculum and syllabi in an educational institution (corroborating evidence [C] is indicated in text).

Our research has directly transformed the design and delivery of the curriculum and syllabi of the GFTU Education Trust, which is based at Quorn, Leicestershire, and is the body responsible for the professional training of officers and members of GFTU affiliated organisations. As a result of our research, the GFTU introduced a fourth tenet to its code of practice for "educational principles" [C1, C2, and C4]. This fourth tenet was "to provide and develop an understanding of the political & economic context which has shaped, and which continues to shape, the historic development of Trade Unions" [C2]. This fundamental change to the culture of education at the GFTU came about following a series of meetings between the GFTU's General Secretary and Executive Committee and historians from the University of Wolverhampton between 2014 and 2016. From 2016, the GFTU codified history as a foundational aspect across all of its educational programmes. The GFTU's educational trust subsequently hosted a new programme of education, which included labour and trade union history [C2]. All workshops, not simply those that offer history-specific content, now provide historical context, drawing on research from Wolverhampton, to explain the broader significance behind every aspect of a trade union's work.

On 29 April 2017, Wolverhampton historians and the GFTU met again at the Peoples' History Museum Manchester to monitor, refine and develop the ways in which the GFTU use labour history in their education programme. Gildart then spoke at their conference to over 100 delegates from 25 affiliated organisations and met the GFTU's Executive Committee to discuss the continued impact of labour history on GFTU education on 14/15 May 2017. As the subsequent GFTU biennial 2019 report explained, "you don't know where you are going, unless you know where you have come from, so an important part of our work is to keep history alive." Without the input of historians from Wolverhampton and in particular Gildart, the GFTU's education programmes would have neglected the significance of history when teaching the next generation of trade union leaders [C4].

The General Secretary of the GFTU, Doug Nicholls, described the value and impact of historical research at the University of Wolverhampton as follows:

“We consider that the impact of this partnership within our organisation, and its knock on influence to 25 national trade unions has been immense and colleagues from the University are popular and welcome participants in our events and thinking.” [C3]

There is documented evidence [C5 to C7] that public understanding has been enhanced through active collaboration between historians from Wolverhampton and the GFTU. Through the education and training of the GFTU, which thousands of union members have accessed, our research has engaged a wide audience who have further developed their knowledge of labour, social, and working class history.

12. Impact on Practitioners (corroborating evidence [C] is indicated in text).

As a result of the changes to the GFTU curriculum, our research has furthered the cultural understanding of the trade union movement in the wider public sphere; and shaped the GFTU and its affiliates' work on community events and their engagement with particular organisations such as the Friends of the Durham Miners Gala. Our research has developed the awareness, attitudes and understanding of GFTU members and affiliates and their ability to make informed decisions on particular issues around societal transformation and the changing nature of work. Their responses to contemporary economic and social problems have been improved by their engagement with historical research provided by historians at Wolverhampton. The research has informed political debate and activities that have challenged established norms, modes of thought and practices within the GFTU and its affiliated organisations. In particular, it has helped to reinstate women and ethnic minorities into contemporary trade union history therefore providing encouragement and historical exemplars to today's diverse labour movement.

Having underpinned the change in the GFTU and its affiliated organisations' culture of education, our research reached, in 2019 alone, 2,072 people from eight trade unions who attended workshops [C3]. Based on this success, a further GFTU affiliate, the SWU, has included trade union and labour history in their conferences and education programmes [C7].

Historians at Wolverhampton have been particularly influential in shaping history-specific GFTU workshops. These sessions are delivered through the 'Our History, Our Future' initiative and 'Living History Day Schools' [C2]. Gildart has personally hosted a workshop on 'the Modern Trade Union Movement' [C8], which interrogates the questions: "Where did we come from? What have we achieved? How have we changed, what did we contribute to society, what can we contribute further?" Discussion of these questions improves our understanding of the role of trade unions in twenty-first Britain and empowers GFTU affiliated organisations to continue to play a key role in a diverse range of employment sectors.

Gildart organised workshops in collaboration with the GFTU using his work on labour biography and popular music at a number of the organisation's 'Radical Summits' held in Stone, Staffordshire and led discussions at three of the GFTU's biennial delegate conferences. Sarah Woolley, the General Secretary of the BFAWU and an attendee of several training courses, explained how the study of history's in GFTU education offered a template for "good practice and ideas developed from them that have been taken forwards within [her] own union and others." [C5]

The General Secretary of the SWU, John McGovern, explained how our research was particularly useful to them as a relatively new union. He notes that:

“[Gildart's] talk on trade union history had the advantage of introducing [labour] biography to it and the response and active questions from members highlighted the interest in the work and trade union history. This is extremely important for us at SWU with being a relatively new union; formed in 2011 but now approaching 13,000 members. Many of whom are new to the trade union movement and its history.” [C7]

He saw immediate benefits that have shaped their approach to future activities and which address the discrepancy in society that means “political literacy is still very much absent from the education curriculum in all but the top private schools. This ensures politics remains the playground of the financially better off and while the sons and daughters of the higher echelons of society are educated in politics, the rest of us are not, creating a division within society.” [C7] As a consequence, the SWU have implemented a political literacy programme covering the History of Trade Unionism.

The current President of the GFTU and Assistant Director of Education at the PFA, Osher Williams, explained: “[*The Dictionary of Labour Biography*] is a significant source of reference incorporating the often understated role of women and ethnically diverse elements of the labour movement.” [C6] The GFTU have used the Dictionary as the basis for a day school entitled, EA72 The Working Class and Issues of Race and Gender in Recent History [C1]. The President and Gildart are now discussing taking the collaboration forward to use even more history in the PFA’s public engagement initiatives. Our research has been particularly pertinent in helping the PFA to develop union-led responses to issues of race and racism in sport; the PFA play a leading role in fighting racism in football and wider society.

The former President of the GFTU, former General Secretary of the MU and currently President of the International Federation of Musicians (IFM), John F Smith, described how Gildart’s research on popular music is immensely important in uncovering the role of music in the history of the trade union movement. In particular, he has highlighted the “cultural aspects of the Labour movement” following Gildart’s contribution to their Liberating Arts Event. He has noted the importance of labour history to the cultural activities of the trade union movement, hailing its “significant value to our federation [IFM] and its wider membership.” [C9]

Research by historians at the University of Wolverhampton has transformed the educational curriculum of the GFTU and its affiliated organisations. Moreover, it has inculcated an interest in labour and social history across a broad swathe of union members. For some, this has been life changing with many now pursuing further study in colleges and universities. Overall, our research has enhanced the GFTU’s awareness of the history of the labour movement and working class culture underpinning its approach to contemporary social issues. The impact of the University of Wolverhampton’s research in history has ensured that the GFTU, its affiliated organisations and members, are now better equipped to meet the challenges they face in the twenty-first century.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- C1. GFTU, Biennial General Council Meeting Documents 2017
- C2. GFTU, Education for Action Brochure 2017-18
- C3. Written statement from Doug Nicholls, General Secretary, GFTU, 2019
- C4. GFTU, All Together Now: the Report of the Executive Committee May 2017-to the Biennial Conference Meeting, London, May 19-21 2019
- C5. Written statement from Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU
- C6. Written statement from Osher Williams, Assistant Director of Education, PFA
- C7. Written statement from John McGovern, General Secretary, SWU
- C8. GFTU, Biennial General Council Meeting Documents 2019
- C9. Written statement from John F. Smith, former General Secretary of the MU and President of the IFM