

Impact Case Study

UoA 30 History

Drs Billy Kelly and Éamonn Ó Ciardha: Imeacht na nIarlaí/The Flight of the Earls and Plandáil Uladh/The Plantation of Ulster: the History and Culture of Derry/Londonderry

This Impact Case Study was based on multiple, reinforcing effects whereby Kelly and Ó Ciardha's research has been repeatedly utilised to develop the cultural presentation of Derry legacies in museums and events. Public policy impact exist in the authors' roles as historical advisors to Donegal County Council's €1m commemoration of the Flight of the Earls (1607-2007) and Derry City Council's winning of UK City of Culture (2013), which utilised the Ulster Plantation as an historical base. Their research changed professional practice among museum officials and teachers, and enhanced popular historical knowledge through outreach and media. It impacted creative practice via programme content and the economy via tourism. The impact draws upon extensive publications based on English- and Irish-language sources. The impact of this research is significant and its reach is not limited to one particular type of user or audience:

Impact on Public Policy: As invited committee members and consultants to Derry City Council and Donegal County Council, their research fed directly into Donegal County Council's 'Flight of the Earls' commemoration and Derry City Council's successful bid for UK City of Culture on the theme of Plantation. The MP for Foyle constituency acknowledged: 'Ó Ciardha [and] Kelly... have proved adept and effective at exploring and explaining the content of historic events without exploding the contention of given divisions [...] The confidence that this narrative could be told and sold informed the bid to be UK City of Culture.' The bid's historical dimension, which these authors shaped, was key to success. Phil Remond, Head of the Judging Panel, noted the importance of historical work which the authors had completed for the bidding team: 'When people read Derry's bid...it's about acknowledging the past, not shying away from the past, and using that point that the past informs our present and helps shape our future. If that is not the role of culture then I don't know what is.'

Impact on Professional Practice: Kelly and Ó Ciardha produced commissioned, popular summaries of their research in several formats for education purposes. Special issues of the popular magazine *History Ireland* focused on the Flight of the Earls (2007) and Plantation (2009). Secondly, they collaborated with local government to produce popular booklet summaries of their research for schools, libraries, etc., which helped Derry City Council's Heritage and Museum Service enhance professional practice, e.g. cross-border schools-based learning programme and new on-line and touring exhibitions to aid community understanding (letter from Head of Council Heritage and Museum Services).

Economic Impact – Tourism: Kelly and Ó Ciardha's leading and public role in the commemoration of key historical events was particularly appreciated by the City Remembrancer as providing 'opportunities for initiatives linking the economic interest of the City of London with Northern Ireland. The enhanced understanding of, and interest in, the history of the Province which Ó Ciardha and his colleagues are generating through their work can only help to ensure a positive reception for such proposals in the City of London' (letter, March 2012). Moreover, the Head of Derry City Council's Heritage and Museum Services, noted that Kelly and Ó Ciardha 'basically provided the intellectual, historical ballast for all of the historical programmes and many of the other events that have already

happened and will happen in the lead up to and including 2013...the events have had an important economic impact, leading to greater visitor numbers and visitor spend in the city'.

Outreach Publications and Historical Documentaries: Impact here includes: Ó Ciardha's *The Flight of the Earls* (Guildhall Press, 2011) highlighted by the popular magazine *BBC History* as one of the books of the year. This major achievement was duly noted in the press, major external stakeholders, and the makers of TV historical documentaries, including *Imeacht na nIarlaí: The Flight of the Earls* (TG4's award-winning 2007 production) and *Plandáil/The Plantation of Ulster* (BBC Northern Ireland, 2011).