

German Life and Letters 73:3 July 2020  
0016-8777 (print); 1468-0483 (online)

## ANNIVERSARIES, THE PUBLIC, AND ACADEMIA

SEÁN M. WILLIAMS  
(UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD)

### ABSTRACT

Anniversaries have been much problematised in scholarship, not least in the present special number. But pragmatically, they are also a tried-and-tested way of engaging with diverse publics. In contemporary British Higher Education, such work is incentivised through the impact agenda of the Research Excellence Framework. The following contribution brings together three British-based colleagues in German Studies, who each reflect on their own practical experiences of capitalising on anniversaries. Henrike Lähnemann discusses commemorative activities and events 500 years after the Reformation, in which she uses translating, printing, and singing as historic impact-style activities to engage audiences in Oxford and beyond. Seán Williams turns to mainstream media, arguing that anniversaries are a useful hook for bringing German Studies content to wider audiences – even if the commemorative occasions seem, on the face of it, less relevant to those of us working in increasingly marginal disciplines in Great Britain. Stefan Manz is concerned with remembering the forgotten ‘collateral’ victims of the First World War during the centenary, particularly those Germans who were interned in camps throughout the British Empire. Manz shows that it is possible to connect the stories of the marginalised to large-scale anniversaries in order to challenge dominant narratives. Here, as in all cases, the key to success is cross-sector collaboration and adaptation to non-academic needs and contexts.

Jubiläen sind problematisch, das betont die Forschung nicht erst seit dem vorliegenden Band. Gleichzeitig sind sie willkommener Anlass und erprobtes Mittel, die allgemeine Öffentlichkeit jenseits des akademischen Diskurses zu erreichen. In der gegenwärtigen britischen Universitätslandschaft wird es durch die ‘impact agenda’ des ‘Research Excellence Frameworks’ (nationale Forschungsevaluierung) gefordert und gefördert. Der folgende Aufsatz versammelt drei Beiträge, die diese Art der Wissenschaftskommunikation aus eigener Erfahrung reflektieren. Henrike Lähnemann diskutiert, wie das 500-jährige Reformationsjubiläum dazu einlädt, historische Propaganda- und Verbreitungsmethoden durch Übersetzen, Drucken und Singen unter Beteiligung aller Zuschauer in Oxford und darüber hinaus zu erproben und kritisch zu hinterfragen. Seán Williams setzt auf Mainstreamkultur und öffentliche Medien als Aufhänger, um die Germanistik einem breiteren Publikum nahezubringen, selbst wenn auf den ersten Blick Jahrestage für die ‘kleinen Fächer’ in Großbritannien erst einmal nicht direkt relevant erscheinen. Stefan Manz geht es darum, die Erinnerung an die vergessenen ‘Kollateralopfer’ des Ersten Weltkriegs zu rekonstruieren, vor allem Deutsche, die in Lagern im gesamten Britischen Empire interniert waren. Manz zeigt, dass es möglich ist, die Geschichte von Marginalisierten mit großangelegten Gedenkjahren zu verbinden um dominante Narrative zu hinterfragen. Das Erfolgsrezept hierfür, wie für alle drei Fälle,

ist sektorübergreifende Zusammenarbeit und Anpassung an außeruniversitäre Bedürfnisse und Kontexte.

Whereas the preceding articles in this special number examine anniversaries critically as historicisable events, contextualising them from a scholarly distance as phenomena about the past that are appropriated for an agenda of a politically and historically charged present, the following adopts a more practical perspective: we are concerned with the potential value of British-based academics 'cashing in' on commemorative culture. Our commitment to criticism is, for these purposes, an immanent and pragmatic one. In three commentaries, colleagues consider how they have capitalised on anniversaries in their work for the purposes of public engagement – and in all three cases, they have done so as pathways to research impact within the rubric of the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) for 2021. 'Impact', should colleagues from outside the UK have escaped its rhetorical (and monetary) grip, is defined in this context as the extension of research beyond its original intellectual or abstract genesis and reception, and more specifically, 'its effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture or public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'.<sup>1</sup> Taken together, it appears that impactful activities prompted by anniversaries are to the advantage of the discipline, at least from financial and reputational points of view. As such, our opinion pieces contribute to an ongoing conversation about changing professional practices in German Studies, a discussion that has moved from the coffee breaks to regular panels at the conferences of the Association of German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland year-on-year, and which has been debated in the present journal, too, since Sarah Colvin's reflections on the state of the field in 2016.<sup>2</sup>

Anniversaries affect scholars of all but the most contemporary of subjects, and historians in the broadest sense. If we scan blogs and opinion pieces by public historians in particular, it is obvious that in recent years anniversaries have come to be perceived as more and more problematic. But it is unclear whether 'anniversaritis' or 'Jubiläumitis', as some have diagnosed the pan-Western cultural malaise that is an obsession with commemoration, is really caused by an actual increase in the number of anniversaries that are celebrated, or rather by our heightened sensibilities as scholars about the often restrictive and hackneyed choices of what and who is elevated to public memorialisation in mainstream commemorative

<sup>1</sup> REF2021: Guidance on submissions, January 2019, <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref-2019-01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf>. All links last accessed 10 July 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Braun and Benedict Schofield, 'Doing German Differently: New Research Practices and Partnerships around the UK', *GLL*, 71 (2018), 374–94; Sarah Colvin, 'Leaning in: Why and How I Still Study the German', *GLL*, 69 (2016), 123–41.

culture.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, the scholarly ‘memory boom’ of the past few decades is not necessarily a boon for academics of historical phenomena working in the wider public sphere – with museums or media organisations, for example. Scholarship has become more critical of memorialisation, through immense and intricate studies of remembrance that have been undertaken across disciplines. Public-facing commemoration is thus subject to greater intellectual scrutiny, even academic cynicism; and to embrace anniversaries in the public sphere may be to risk personal credibility as a scholar. At the same time, it is more important than ever that academic work has an effect beyond the academy, for public accountability; and for reasons we shall return to in a moment, the imperative of impact applies, above all, to minor or vulnerable subjects in British Higher Education – notably German Studies. In this context, anniversaries offer the most tried-and-tested way to hook specific stakeholders and audiences within that vague monolith popularly and misleadingly called the ‘general public’, and to reel those parties in. In present-day commemorative culture, therefore, the roles of a dispassionate researcher and engaged academic can easily collide: the critics who use anniversaries to reach non-university audiences are complicit in the sort of memory work their peers and perhaps they themselves criticise, yet they also – thanks to their complicity – might have the chance to change the story.

Little wonder, then, that the journal *German History* has devoted an issue of its ‘Forum’ section to the topic of anniversaries. In that substantive discussion from 2014, five leading academics considered the advantages and disadvantages of anniversaries for the profession, presenting a range of interpretations of the problem – and viewpoints.<sup>4</sup> While Thomas Brady begins by lamenting the lack of dynamism in the ways in which historians have embraced commemorative events, regretting a ‘continuity in approach [...] continuity in the anniversary calendar itself’, it turns out that he is bemoaning renewed attention to ‘a familiar set of dates, events and personalities’ within the academic discipline of German history – and which he believes can be rectified by commemorative conferences that decentre a set, central narrative for a given subject.<sup>5</sup> The three commentaries that constitute the present article, by contrast, are concerned only with academic activity in the public sphere, rather than discussions within the discipline of German Studies. To be sure, the ‘Forum’ debate helpfully sketches the fault lines of academics’ attitudes towards such public work as well. Dan Healey expresses some concern that it dresses up scholars as ‘Punch-and-Judy puppets or surrogate

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. the following blog posts from 2014 and 2018 respectively: <https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/2-2014-11/vom-jubilaum-zur-jubilaemitis/>; <https://www.merkur-zeitschrift.de/2018/04/27/fake-history-geschichte-hinter-glas/>. The DOI for these posts is: <https://doi.org/10.1515/phw-2014-1682>.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Forum: Anniversaries’, *German History*, 32 (2014), 79–100.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

entertainers' – his nuanced, if a little idealised commitment to greater public understanding of history notwithstanding. By comparison, Tim Grady appears more relaxed, arguing that 'the moment of heightened public interest provides an opportunity to be seized rather than a threat to be evaded'.<sup>6</sup> This opposition in academics' opinions as cited in isolation here represents the familiar ding-dong between apologists for the present-day public good versus traditionalists who are concerned about an erosion of scholarly seriousness. A reasonable response, as the full course of the conversation in *German History* in fact makes clear, is neither polemical stance, and is worked out according to a given situation. Consequently, the three commentaries from German Studies colleagues that follow offer insights that emerge from first-hand experience – and in REF terms, from their Impact Case Studies specifically. Together they refute, as well as at times confirm, common assumptions about anniversaries and their usefulness to academics in engaging the wider public during and with their research.

As Henrike Lähnemann amusingly recounts, a gathering designed to subversively *not* stage Martin Luther pinning ninety-five theses to a door on the occasion of the 500th anniversary in 2017 was reported in the local student press as precisely the opposite: as a popular event with Luther nailing the theses to the door of Oxford's History Faculty. Some historical narratives stick in the public consciousness, and are continually reprinted, regardless of their factual accuracy. Lähnemann's work capitalises on the currency of anniversary content – in her case, about Martin Luther – but employs social media and other forms of dissemination that are not framed by traditional media or mainstream media organisations, and with fewer obvious gatekeepers, thereby freeing the ways in which she can cover the topic. Of course, in return for greater narrative freedom, such efforts entail that audiences are not a given, and so they must be generated and evidenced. How great a freshly established audience might count as success? Moreover, success in the Twittersphere is actually as much constrained by formal conventions and modes of affective framing as mainstream broadcast or print media, just of a different kind (think of the 'On This Day' type tweets, which have their stock tropes and formats). Lähnemann may not have to adapt to anniversary norms, but she must play by the rules that govern her chosen domain of public engagement all the same.

Seán M. Williams reflects on his experiences in mainstream broadcast and print media. It is often presumed that anniversaries are immovable feasts – by definition, they occur at a prescribed point in time. Typically, academics must answer two questions: is their work relevant to a given commemoration, and do or will they have something to say by then? As Williams argues, however, anniversaries can also be seen as opportunities

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

to bring less expected or even unexpected German content to bear on a by now familiar, British subject, subtly disrupting the master-narrative by extending its scope. To this end, British anniversaries can be surprisingly useful to researchers of foreign topics, though on the face of it they may seem irrelevant. They are certainly – and understandably – covered to a greater extent in the British media, so are worth appropriating if possible. The latest and clearest example is the 200th anniversary of Prince Albert's birth in August 2019, for which Williams was commissioned to write an article on the German historical context for the British broadsheet *The Observer*. But this example also brings home a practical risk of using anniversaries as contemporary hooks. For on the night before the publication of Williams's commentary, the current Royal Family was suddenly and scandalously in the headlines; and a historical story that had at first seemed relevant soon did not sit comfortably within the same news cycle, as Williams explains.

If Lähnemann suggests methods for side-stepping the mainstream coverage of anniversaries, and Williams offers a way of altering it, Stefan Manz decentres the most commemorated and high-profile anniversary of recent years: the memory of the First World War. To do so, Manz collaborated with museums and heritage sites in Britain, Commonwealth countries, and the United States that sought to promote the same marginalised histories as those discussed and in part discovered by his research. In other words, to re-frame the story of the First World War from the perspective of interned 'enemy alien' civilians, Manz forged allies for the dissemination of knowledge and the hosting of his engagement activities (assisted by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council). All in all, then, impact is as much a pragmatic as it is an intellectually-inspired matter.

There is a long-standing tradition of lofty apologies for public-facing scholarship, at least since the Enlightenment. The practical reasons for being an academic committed to working with and for the broader public, meanwhile, tend to be conceived as unique to their age – and then forgotten once a discipline, now re-established along new lines, again lays claim to being a timeless endeavour. It was ever thus. For example, Public History might be understood as either an heir to Enlightenment thinking or perhaps a manifestation of post-1968, socially engaged academia. Both are a worthy lineage, but in the United States the National Council on Public History that defined the new historical sub-discipline was actually born out of a pragmatic concern: the jobs crisis in universities of the mid-1970s.<sup>7</sup> Opportunity and creativity were the children of necessity.

In the UK today, there is a different but equally material, institutional incentive for conducting academic work in the public arena. The impact agenda of the REF ranks departments according to the uptake of their

<sup>7</sup> See Barbara J. Howe, 'Perspectives on an Anniversary', *The Public Historian*, 21/3 (1999), 9–14.

research in the public domain. The score for impact releases an annual dividend that for units in Modern Languages is not insubstantial: crunching the numbers from a range of public sources suggests that the average yearly 'quality-related (QR)' sum for a 3\* ('very considerable') Impact Case Study was about £10,700 following REF2014, and some £42,800 for work judged to be of 4\* ('outstanding') quality. The latter sum equates, more or less, to the annual salary of a lecturer undertaking teaching and research for a department. What is more, applications for funding grants increasingly include sections for proposals of impact-oriented work-streams, such that some activities in submitted Impact Case Studies might not cost departments a penny to undertake. The last commentary-style contribution to *German Life and Letters* noted the closures of German departments across the UK, to which regrettably we should add the quieter forms of dismantling the discipline, such as non-replacement of posts whenever members of staff change institutions or retire. In the light of this institutional precariousness of German Studies – despite intellectually flourishing research projects – impact revenue via REF and/or funding schemes can be a shot in the arm for subjects like ours: those that are currently experiencing pressures from management, and a downturn in undergraduate recruitment. Anniversaries are but one, well-trodden avenue towards a welcome sort of capital.

Further, the public types of activity that can contribute to impact may also benefit the popular perception of German Studies. Positive and plural images of what might constitute the study of 'German' among the general public are urgently needed. As the BBC reported in early 2019, in the previous school year five council education departments in Scotland recorded no National 4 or 5 exams in German at all; across the border in England, in 2017 three local authorities made no entries for German from state schools whatsoever.<sup>8</sup> Against this backdrop of shrinking cohorts for German in schools and radically less familiarity with what 'German' culture might mean among young people, not to mention a broader demographic dip in school leavers-cum-university applicants, it is advantageous if anniversaries can be appropriated for the PR of all things German in the UK.

It is no exaggeration to say that 'anniversary capital' is of material and perhaps even existential benefit to German Studies – at least for the subject's institutional bottom line, and for public opinion. But intellectually, anniversaries and associated cultures of commemoration are also problematic in ways that have been more thoughtfully discussed elsewhere, in a substantial body of scholarly work to which this special number contributes. In short, anniversaries are both an academic area of

<sup>8</sup> See Branwen Jeffreys, 'Language learning: German and French drop by half in UK schools' [BBC News Online, 27.2.2019], news stories on 27 February 2019, e.g. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47334374>.

study and what might be referred to – in praise or casual dismissal, often ideologically – as a ‘real-world problem’. Scholars who are engaged with the general public negotiate this intersection using a wide range of approaches, and a good dose of pragmatic judgement – just three variants of which are examined here.

REMEMBERING THE REFORMATION. LESSONS FROM 1983 AND 2017

HENRIKE LÄHNEMANN (UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

Anniversaries tell us as much about those celebrating as about the historic event being celebrated. This is particularly true with regard to the German Reformation. Indeed, the German fascination with jubilees started in 1617, exactly a hundred years after Martin Luther published his ninety-five theses on 30 October 1517. The Reformation’s anniversaries have been commemorated ever since. In the following contribution, I draw on my practical experience of organising commemorative events four hundred years later, for the quincentenary in 2017.<sup>9</sup> In preparing for these, I found myself referring back to the last big Reformation-themed anniversary in 1983, 500 years after Martin Luther’s birth. My part of this joint article on ‘anniversary capital’ is therefore more of a reflection on Reformation anniversaries in Germany and the UK than an academic discussion of methodological approaches to memorial culture.

I decided to organise the events for 2017 for a number of reasons. Firstly, to highlight the large teaching collection of Reformation pamphlets in the Taylor Institution Library; secondly, to integrate new approaches such as material philology, digital editing, and crowd-sourced translation into teaching History of the Book for Master’s students, and early-modern German literature and culture for undergraduates; finally, to test the impact potential for Modern Languages at Oxford, building on work I had done while based at Newcastle University (2006–14), where I had worked on the Medieval Heritage of the Northern German Convents.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The talk I gave at the AGS 2018, on which this article is based, is accessible online and includes all illustrations: see <https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/people/henrike-laehnemann> under the heading ‘Podcasts, Press Releases and Online Resources’ (19). Literature on Martin Luther, the German Reformation, and even just on Reformation centenaries is overwhelming. A reading list on the beginnings of the Reformation and the date of 1517 is available as part of the open access publication of the ninety-five theses, with a translation and introduction: *Martin Luther. Sermon von Ablass und Gnade. 95 Thesen*, ed. Howard Jones, Martin Keßler, Henrike Lähnemann, and Christina Ostermann [Treasures of the Taylorian. Series One: Reformation Pamphlets, ed. Henrike Lähnemann, vol. 2], Oxford 2018, <https://editions.mml.ox.ac.uk/editions/ablassgnade5/>.

<sup>10</sup> Available as case study 217180 submitted by the Modern Languages and Linguistics Unit of Assessment, Newcastle University for REF2014: Medieval Heritage in the Convents of Northern Germany: Rediscovery, Preservation and Presentation, [Henrike Lähnemann], submitted December 2013 <https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=21718> (accessed 6 June 2020).

The combination of these factors made me plan the quincentenary events as pathways to impact from the start – and the activities were digitally conceived to achieve maximum visibility. This meant advertising all events in advance through a dedicated blog,<sup>11</sup> feeding through not just to university sites but to the town council committee preparing the seventieth anniversary of Oxford's twinning with Bonn, to church circulars of different denominations, and to the mailing lists of choirs, local book history groups, and more. I decided to concentrate on three strands, which would bring together my research interests, teaching requirements, and local resources: singing, printing, and translating. As important as advertising the events was archiving them, capturing the activities where possible not just through blogs and reports, but also video podcasts, a Reformation-themed walking tour of Oxford, and the documentation of audience feedback. The dedicated blog became part of the digital editions site of the Taylor Institution Library, which was itself inspired by the Reformation events, and now includes a wide variety of resources. It has just won a teaching excellence award.<sup>12</sup> After its humble start as a calendar tool, the Remembering the Reformation site thus has become an important teaching and research resource open to the interested public and constantly expanded and updated.

The hub for this type of public engagement has been the Taylor Institution Library, which not only holds the original pamphlets, but also has a dedicated German subject librarian, Emma Huber, who took the idea of a digital repository of Reformation material including editions and recordings and ran with it. The most important colleague for collaboration was Lyndal Roper, whose seminal new biography of Martin Luther came out just in time for the quincentenary.<sup>13</sup> For the 'Singing the Reformation' strand, I had the good fortune to start my Oxford job at the same time as the Oxford Bach Soloists were founded; together we developed a workshop-style concert programme, tracing Reformation hymns from their roots in pre-Reformation liturgy via Luther's transformation to Johann Sebastian Bach's cantata settings, and took this music back to Germany as part of the 'kloster [*sic*] mal anders' celebrations of the role of convents in the Reformation. Performances in the Protestant convents of Mariensee and

<sup>11</sup> The Reformation at the Taylor Institution Library. A Bodleian Libraries blog, set up by Emma Huber, the German subject librarian at the Taylor Institution Library, and Henrike Lähnemann in 2016, <http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/taylor-reformation/> (accessed 6 June 2020).

<sup>12</sup> The "Taylor Editions" series was set up as an open access publication forum for the Reformation Pamphlets of the Taylor Institution Library in 2017; the Reformation series has become one of several "topics": <https://editions.mml.ox.ac.uk/topics/reformation.shtml>. For a report on the Teaching Excellence Award for Emma Huber cf. the news feed of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford: <https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/news/2019/07/02/double-win-teaching-excellence-awards> (accessed 6 June 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther. Renegade and Prophet*, New York 2017.



Lüne were packed, since I had worked with the communities there for my previous Impact Case Study on medieval monastic heritage.

Luther and memorial culture go back over 400 years. The first anniversary of the publication of the ninety-five theses, in 1617, can claim to be the occasion when a memory ritual designed by and for academia became a public phenomenon.<sup>14</sup> The Protestant princes needed a symbol of unity during the upheaval of the Thirty Years' War – and the pithy format of the theses was an appropriate reference point for the common cause of resistance against Rome and Catholicism. Since that time, in every century the 30 October of the seventeenth year has been taken as the official birthday of the Reformation. A culture of commemoration spread to secular institutions, culminating in the historicism of the nineteenth century, when there was an anniversary of the Reformation every quarter-century. A growing personality cult around Martin Luther as the German reformer meant that the centenaries of his birth were also increasingly celebrated, and that the general Reformation jubilees became focused on the monumentalised figure of Luther, 'der Deutsche'. The National Socialists used him in that way, as can still be seen in buildings such as the Martin-Luther-Gedächtniskirche in Berlin-Mariendorf, commissioned in 1933, the year of Luther's 450th birthday, where Luther's signature hymn *Ein feste Burg* was written on the wall, surrounded by swastikas and a bust of Hitler.

The different ways of claiming Luther as a symbolic figure continued after the war and were put to the test in 1983, the quincentenary of his birth. For 1967, the 450-year anniversary of the Reformation, the GDR had dealt with the difficulty of a symbolic Christian date by packaging it with the celebrations for 900 years of the Wartburg and 150 years since the Wartburgfest, but presenting Luther as a local heritage event was no longer possible for the quincentenary of his birth. The GDR government realised the large tourist potential of the memorials to Luther, or 'Luther-Gedenkstätten', most of which were located on its territory, and so they presented an image of the young Luther as a revolutionary figure, and they highlighted his contribution to German language, literature, and culture.<sup>15</sup>

The high point of the 'Martin Luther Ehrung 1983 der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik' was the publication in 1981 of the programmatically entitled fifteen *Thesen über Martin Luther. Zum 500. Geburtstag*, written by a working group of Fellows of the East Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften, and chaired by Erich Honecker. The fifteen theses instead of the ninety-five are much wordier to make up for the lack in numbers. In accordance with an interest in making Luther a

<sup>14</sup> Dorothea Wendebourg, 'Reformationsjubiläen und Lutherbilder', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 52 (2016), <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/239245/reformationsjubilaeen-und-lutherbilder?p=all>.

<sup>15</sup> The MDR documented the 1983 celebrations on a dedicated website: <https://www.mdr.de/thueringen/kultur/zeitgeschehen/wartburg-refjahr-lutherjahr-ddr-100.html>.

figurehead for the tourist industry, the *Thesen* came with a number of plates showing the GDR as an attractive destination which looked after its World Heritage Sites. Since they could not boast Trier, the birthplace of co-jubilant Karl Marx (1983 was the centenary commemorating Marx's death), the Wartburg had to stand in as symbol of the Revolution and Luther was duly linked to Marx. Thesis XII starts with the claim that it is really only Marxists who can appreciate Luther: 'Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels schufen mit der Grundlegung des historischen Materialismus auch die Umrisse für eine wissenschaftliche Auffassung der Reformation und Martin Luthers.'<sup>16</sup>

In West Germany, the year of 1967 marked a new interest in Luther from the Catholic side in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5), where the question of Church reform became alive again.<sup>17</sup> From the perspective of the twenty-first century, the excitement of this shift in the Catholic Church's attitudes gets lost among the much more noisy sound of the 1968 student revolution, but the opening of the Catholic Church and the resulting growth of the ecumenical movement probably shaped German society of the seventies and eighties equally strongly. This made the Protestant side also look afresh at the Reformation as part of a series of late medieval reform movements. This became very apparent in the West-German signature event at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg in 1983, when blockbuster exhibitions were still a young phenomenon. The catalogue *Martin Luther und die Reformation in Deutschland* presents Luther as a medieval man in a time of crisis. The museum, housed in the medieval walls of the former Nuremberg Charterhouse, set the scene for a stark and dark show of medieval doom and gloom. All visitors entered the exhibition through the life-size cast of the huge portal featuring the Last Judgement ('Weltgerichtportal') from the cemetery in Wittenberg.

The setting fused with the sense of pressing urgency that also pervaded the 'Ostermärsche', annual protest marches against nuclear arms. How the new understanding of Martin Luther as emerging from the religious culture of his time was informed by the political, cultural, and religious questions of the 1980s becomes particularly apparent when looking at the twenty pages of advertisements at the end of the catalogue. The theme of trying to find security in a time of impending doom runs through nearly half of them, trying to sell insurance ('Sicherheit und Vorsorge' for cars or life) – in a way, the modern equivalent of indulgences and directly opposed to the radical teaching of the young Luther explained in the exhibition. Another sinister side of the appendix was that several of the advertised

<sup>16</sup> Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, *Martin Luther Ehrung 1983 der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. Horst Bartel, together with a group of academics, Berlin 1981, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Gerhard Ringshausen, 'Das 450. Reformationsjubiläum 1967 in West und Ost', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, 26 (2013), 373–99.

publications on Luther praised him as the ‘patron saint of Germanness’ and were written by an old guard of far-right authors.

More than a generation after the end of World War II, nationalist readings of Luther had still survived in the popular perception and could be presented alongside a new evaluation of Luther as a medieval figure, who was part of a society in search of solutions for a time of crisis. What had remained from previous heroic readings of Luther was how he still was claimed as a matter of fact as ‘Nothelfer’ – whether for Germany (the ‘Feste Burg’ Luther of the far right), for activism in the face of apocalypse (the ‘Apfelbäumchen’ Luther of the Easter marches), or reform became alive again Luther of the GDR ‘Thesen’). How does this contrast and compare with my 2017 experience of celebrating the quincentenary of the Reformation in the now united Germany and in England? The signature piece must be the Playmobil figure. This was a special commission by the EKD (Evangelische Kirche Deutschland) and the DZT (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus), who provided a little folding map of German places linked to Luther; the tourism concern of the GDR continued in a united Germany in a new guise. The model for this ‘Reformationsbotschafter’ was Lucas Cranach the Elder’s iconic portrait for the head and the Luther monument in Wittenberg by Johann Gottfried Schadow from 1821 for the posture and the book (see Figure 1). Since the main cost factor for new figurines is designing new moulds for parts, Martin Luther was completely assembled from existing parts, combining the cap of a policeman, the wig of a woman, and the gown of a vampire. It became the fastest selling Playmobil figure in history (34,000 figurines sold in seventy-two hours, and by June 2017 over a million),<sup>18</sup> gaining its own social media hashtag #littleLuther and its own anti-Semitism row – the inscription in the book picked up from Schadow had to be modified since commentators on social media took the word ‘ENDE’ on the left hand side to refer to the ‘Altes Testament’.

Luther in toy format is part of the merchandisation of the anniversary industry, but it has advantages: it secures instant recognisability while preventing heroic monumentalisation. So I placed #littleLuther on Reformation pamphlets in the Taylorian, on the printing frame of the student type-set *95 Theses* in The Bodleian Bibliographic Press, on the lectern when talking about the heritage of the Reformation, and it featured in the photographs of these events for the brochure for the programme of seventy years of town twinning between Oxford and Bonn. The tweets were the most likely to be picked up, conveniently linking the cuteness factor of the toy for the general public and the comic factor of the commercialisation of salvation by grace alone for the early-modern studies specialists – and with a nice self-referencing twist of talking about the media change of

<sup>18</sup> <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playmobil-Luther>.



Lucas Cranach (1529) – Playmobil (2015) – Johann Gottfried Schadow (1821)

Figure 1. Slide from a popular lecture on Luther's lasting legacy, showing how a portrait of Luther by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and a sculpture of him by Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764–1850) were morphed into Playmobil. Source of photographs of the portrait and sculpture: Wikimedia Commons. Photograph of the Playmobil figure by Henrike Lähnemann.

the Reformation through symbolic representation on social media.<sup>19</sup> For if the main academic insight of 1983 had been the medieval apocalyptic Luther, that of 2017 was the media-savvy Luther who realised the potential of vernacular writing and the popular appeal and public reach of singing, and who used the printing press to maximum effect.<sup>20</sup> 'Reformation als Medienereignis' is very much a twenty-first century take on history which is informed by a generation of digital natives and reflects on a social-media strategy that highlights for us the way in which the Reformation was carried along by printing natives. Thus my narrative became that of Luther as Impact Coordinator of the Reformation through translating, printing, and singing. I picked key activities in order to engage the community in Oxford and beyond via multiple ways, among them an online walking tour,<sup>21</sup> print sessions with school groups, congregational singing workshops,

<sup>19</sup> The #littleLuther tweet was the only reference to the twinning picked up by the University of Oxford press office and used subsequently for an Open Door event, <https://twitter.com/UniofOxford/status/1038321160319066112?s=20>.

<sup>20</sup> It all started with Berndt Hamm, 'Die Reformation als Medienereignis', *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*, 11 (1996), 137–66; a summary of the discussion since then is in my piece for the Taylor Edition mentioned in note 9.

<sup>21</sup> 'Walking Tour of Reformation sites in Oxford', based on Julia Cameron, *Oxford and Cambridge Reformation Walking Tour*, Oxford 2018, and hosted by the oxfordstories platform developed

concerts with the Oxford Bach Soloists, and a public relay reading of the *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen*, which the Catholic mayor of Bonn read as well as colleagues, students, and members of the Oxford Lutheran congregation. But I also talked about the success of impact for critical reflection, not least because my own research is mainly on the literary production of the convents where nuns writing manuscripts threw Luther's printed German New Testament into the fire, seeing it as heretical and as spreading fake news, not good news.

The challenge, therefore, is how to develop an academically sound narrative that carries. Organising the quincentenary events in Oxford, I learned that it is nearly impossible to replace a narrative that is embedded in cultural memory. Lyndal Roper and I staged an event with a printing press at the door of the History Faculty on 30 October. Ed Wareham, one of the Reformation historians who played Luther complete with fake tonsure, announced loudly: 'I do not nail the theses to the door'. But the message reported through the subtitles of the video clip in the student newspaper (watched over 30,000 times) was that the 'History Faculty stood in for the church in Wittenberg Luther nailed his Theses to'.<sup>22</sup> The same applies to the images: iconoclasm is futile; to make a graven image is a fundamental human desire.

However, it is possible to use the popular icon as a hook to engage more diverse audiences – and to break the hero-worshipping cycle via humour. The impact agenda is questionable, especially in its quantitative aspects (how do you measure the life-changing influence of research?), but it provides a helpful perspective on anniversaries. I conducted a number of short feedback interviews with participants from the workshop in the printing press and in congregations where we had explored the Reformation legacy in hymnbooks. It turned out that the methods used by Luther in spreading the word via printing (in graphic text and images), translating (the Bible), and singing (helped by the new genre of hymnbooks) still worked for an audience of the twenty-first century. I found that I rediscovered texts which had become part of a rather dusty set of historic artefacts anew, when working on them with new audiences in Oxford. An example of this is the new translation of *Ein feste Burg*, which is printed in the URC hymnbook 'Rejoice and Sing' and which I used in workshops with local congregations and school children. It rendered Luther's version of Psalm 46 in a language that reflected on the experience

by TORCH (the Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities) with Pitt Rivers Museum; <http://oxfordstories.ox.ac.uk/reformation-walking-tour> (accessed 7 June 2020).

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/CherwellOnline/videos/10159388676185167/> at second 12. The video was uploaded on 31 October 2017 by the University of Oxford student paper Cherwell to their Facebook page (no further credits given). There is a blog post about it at <https://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/taylor-reformation/2017/12/19/because-you-know-its-all-about-that-grace-about-that-grace-reenacting-reformation-at-oxford-university/> written by Emma Huber and posted on 19 December 2017.

of Christians under totalitarianism: ‘Der Fürst dieser Welt, / wie sau’r er sich stellt / tut er uns doch nicht, / das macht, er ist gericht’t, / ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen’ becomes ‘the tyrants of this age / strut briefly on their stage: / their sentence has been passed / We stand unharmed at last, / a word from God destroys them.’ Remembering the Reformation, it turned out, meant recovering some of the excitement, the revolutionary potential – not in a proto-Marxist sense but in the sense that it could touch people’s lives today. And that could well be a lasting impact of the impact agenda.

#### ANNIVERSARIES AS AVENUES INTO GERMAN MEDIA CONTENT

SEÁN M. WILLIAMS (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD)

Public engagement, especially in the mainstream media, has formed a significant strand of my research activity since 2016. I have contributed to BBC Radio 3 as a New Generation Thinker, to local radio in the UK, and Swiss national radio, as well as to the World Service. Alongside appearances as a talking head on television, I write for the press, including titles such as *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, among others. Audience figures range from the tens to hundreds of thousands, with one commission reaching over half a million. In doing such work, and in the role as my home department’s Impact and Engagement Lead, I have begun to comment in academic forums on public-facing activity and its potential value for the field.<sup>23</sup> In what follows, I do not seek to be normative, and harbour no hopes that my activities should be deemed ‘best practice’ – those dreadful words are enough to deaden any discipline. Rather, I wish to reflect on how I have appropriated anniversaries in three recent examples of my mainstream media work.

Anniversaries in particular have long been lamented within the academy. William Johnston writes in 1991 already of ‘commercial overkill’ in his book *Celebrations: The Cult of Anniversaries in Europe and the United States Today*, while in 2015 Ryan Lizardi criticises the media’s uptake of memory culture especially.<sup>24</sup> Lizardi wryly quips that ‘any year anniversary divisible by five presents media producers with a commodification opportunity’.<sup>25</sup> Today, it is certainly the case that anniversaries are the media’s tried-and-tested rationale for justifying a programme, or a long read in the

<sup>23</sup> See Braun and Schofield, ‘Doing German Differently’ (note 2), 389–91; Seán M. Williams, ‘The research impact of broadcast programming reconsidered: Academic involvement in programme-making’, *Research for All*, 3 (2019), 218–23.

<sup>24</sup> William Johnston, *Celebrations: The Cult of Anniversaries in the Europe and the United States Today*, New Brunswick and London 1991, p. 66; Ryan Lizardi, *Mediated Nostalgia: Individual Memory and Contemporary Mass Media*, Landham, MD and London 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Lizardi, *Mediated Nostalgia* (note 24), p. 123.

pitching or commissioning process – just as they constitute a favourite moment to launch a new catalogue of books. (Though we should note that the tradition of treating anniversaries as occasions for editions and their reprints goes far back into history, not least to the ‘Jubiläumsausgabe’ of Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* in 1824, fifty years after the work’s original publication.) The usefulness of anniversaries has continued as the ways have changed in which media are typically consumed: BBC Radio has capitalised on anniversaries not only for individual programmes, but also to create themes across its content as a whole. Radio 3 has promoted seasons of ‘speech programming’ (as the counterpart to its music content) on seventy years of both the Partition of India (in 2017) and the National Health Service (in 2018), as just two examples. What is more, the BBC has chosen such anniversaries for thematic coherence across its platforms, too, because of audience engagement via iPlayer, podcast stores, and now BBC Sounds rather than solely, or even primarily, through traditional radio or television channels. Anniversaries return time and again – literally, and as a scheduling trope – and so it makes sense to ask whether they are obstacles or opportunities for academics wanting to bring their work to public attention, and influence media stakeholders.

We may object in principle to the ways in which anniversaries are embraced uncritically, at least at first glance. Especially for those of us who work on literature, an author’s anniversary promotes – yet again – an unimaginatively and problematically individualist, and above all a biographical understanding of authorship that decades of research and theory have sought to destabilise. And as well as being a clichéd occasion, anniversaries can be controversial – although public dispute can itself raise the profile of a discipline. For anniversaries might politically mobilise the past, and so promote a certain cultural narrative, whose claims to truth are – problematically – not always presented as an argument or opinion, but instead as indisputable fact, with added media-cum-academic authority. Pragmatically, however, I welcome anniversaries as a reliable and generally accepted reason for promoting historical content – content that competes, after all, with current affairs, contemporary cultural topics, and entertainment. I would also go so far as to argue that anniversaries actually enable a more subtle and subversive type of history than would otherwise be the case, simply by virtue of foregrounding received chronology and wisdom that then can be questioned as much as it may be rehearsed.

Programmes and press articles obviously require viewing, listening, and reading publics. These audiences need a reason to engage. Although every commissioning call will ask for programmes that offer – and here comes the stock line – ‘fresh and exciting new perspectives’, this catch-phrase does not mean a topic that is absolutely unfamiliar to us. Otherwise, why would viewers and listeners switch on, or readers continue with a long-form article? If in everyday life we are generally drawn to the familiar, originality in the media is most often understood as commissioners asking themselves

the question: 'does this programme tell me something I thought I knew, but actually takes me into unknown and/or surprising territory?' Anniversaries therefore offer a ready-made marketing device for content that is somehow of general recollection – but they also facilitate a chance for an *under-acknowledged* take on a subject (note: rarely a totally unacknowledged one). There is a margin for a new type of memorialisation, which media organisations are invested in: content that makes them stand out. This sort of engagement necessitates, first, playing to the crowd, and second, taking audiences who are won over in an unexpected direction.

The metaphor of a journey from the known into unknown territory is helpful for us in German Studies, and in foreign languages more broadly. As Germanists, we may feel we are at a disadvantage when trying to capitalise on the anniversary as justification in pitching our research for programming or print space, in Britain anyway. Most anniversaries understandably celebrate British topics. But in my experience, most media commissioners, producers, and editors are keen for content about foreign contexts; yet they must be relatable to the British-based public. Otherwise, they are not doing their job. The situation is perhaps slightly different – some would say better – in Germany. To take but one example, newspapers and broadcasters such as Deutschlandfunk duly commissioned features on the 250th anniversary of the Anglo-Irish writer Laurence Sterne's death.<sup>26</sup> While it is notable that all the German media reports mentioned Sterne's influence on German authors such as Jean Paul Richter or Friedrich Nietzsche, they did so only in passing. It was apparently unnecessary to embed Sterne within the German context in order to speak or write about him in Germany. Most of the German features, therefore, went into some detail about Sterne's life and works, offering academics the straightforward opportunity to give a sound-bite or two directly related to their expertise. The occasion was an obvious opportunity for engagement, possibly even research impact – but such a chance for academic engagement is confined to specific quotation on an obviously relevant topic. The British context, meanwhile – perhaps on the face of it thought to be more philistine – opens up relative space for creativity. If interest cannot be assumed, and must be cultivated instead, there is arguably a wider range of potential angles we might adopt. It is in fact also more intellectually challenging.

As the first and primary example of the use of anniversaries in my own work, I was asked in late February 2018 whether I would like to present BBC Radio 3's flagship cultural magazine show, *Free Thinking*, for a night. I was also given free rein of what the forty-five minute programme might be about. I was keen to push a German topic, of course, and I really desired to do something on – as Laurence Sterne would say – my hobbyhorse: the late

<sup>26</sup> Michael Langer, 'Eine Lange Nacht über Laurence Sterne. Der Erfinder des modernen Romans', Deutschlandfunk, [17.3.2018], <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/eine-lange-nacht-ueber-laurence-sterne-der-erfinder-des-704.de.html?dram:article?id=410679>



eighteenth century. The day of broadcast, World Book Day, suggested to me that I could go beyond the boundaries of Britain. Indeed, that is why I had been approached. Yet I still needed a hook. And as I went through ideas with my editor, we simply couldn't find a German topic that was somehow of the moment, and would be recognisable enough for British listeners to remain switched on, or to tune in. (And via the podcast store, now BBC Sounds, we were aiming for increasing North American, Irish, and other international English-speaking listeners as well.)

I fell back on an anniversary. 2018 marked 250 years since the death of Laurence Sterne. His final work, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, was published the same year: 1768. I had discussed the text academically in my monograph, alongside its influence on German writers (especially Jean Paul).<sup>27</sup> But more importantly for the purposes of the programme, a new edition of Sterne's last book, illustrated by Martin Rowson, was being launched by the Laurence Sterne Trust that spring – and there was an event taking place at the London Review of Books bookshop during the week in which the programme aired. I knew I could not chair a discussion entirely about how *A Sentimental Journey* travelled through German literature, but I realised I would be able to broaden the debate beyond English letters to mainland Europe by, first, focusing on the plot's trip onto the continent (and the contemporary problem of obtaining a passport), and, second, inviting not only a colleague from English Studies into the studio, but also the Germanist Duncan Large from the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia. At the same time, as my producer pointed out, the novelist Philip Hensher was releasing his latest work, *The Friendly Ones* (2018). Philip had written his doctorate on eighteenth-century satire, so my editor decided we could start with a reading by Hensher from his new novel, and move on to his own past preoccupation with eighteenth-century letters. From there, we would segue into Sterne and on to European fiction. (To my delight, Philip suddenly launched into talking about Jean Paul – without any prior briefing at all!) To round off the magazine-style format, I brought British travel writer Nick Hunt on board, whose book concerned walking through European winds – about which Sterne makes many a joke.<sup>28</sup>

It becomes clear that I did not manage to create a programme all about a German author. Instead, we resorted to an age-old hook – a 'British' anniversary, albeit of an Anglo-Irish writer. Notwithstanding this conventional framing, much of the resulting discussion was about the eighteenth century across Europe and, even more than that, cosmopolitanism and travel generally, including in the German-speaking world. This was especially aided by the fact that, as Stefan Manz's

<sup>27</sup> Seán M. Williams, *Pretexes for Writing: German Romantic Prefaces, Literature, and Philosophy*, Lewisburg, WV 2019.

<sup>28</sup> The full programme is available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09t2g8g>.

commentary below shows, university research in German Studies has become increasingly international and comparative.

I like to think that the Anglophile Jean Paul would have approved. There were many German Sterneans, or Shandean Germans, in the late eighteenth century, but Jean Paul stands out among them for appropriating literary material in English, and adapting it for German cultural criticism. In turn, the Scotsman Thomas Carlyle translated Jean Paul for British audiences, and to his own argumentative ends. Carlyle first translated excerpts from Jean Paul's work in his 1827 collection *German Romance*, followed by two short, stand-alone pieces elsewhere. According to Carlyle's prefatory remarks on Jean Paul in 1827, he aspired to the 'introduction of him to a people whom he knew and valued'.<sup>29</sup> In this endeavour, Carlyle was successful: for a short time, Jean Paul was *en vogue* in Britain. Carlyle continued to educate the reading public about the author: also in 1827, he discussed Heinrich Doehring's biography of Jean Paul in *The Edinburgh Review*, which had been published on the author's death. And in a later article of 1830 in *The Foreign Review*, Carlyle observes that 'our Insular taste must be opening more and more into a European one'.<sup>30</sup> Carlyle sees the uptake of Jean Paul among the public, which he himself brought about, as a positive indication of developments within British culture more generally.

Reading of Carlyle's early faith in the Europhile curiosity of the British public, and the British public's interest in culture abroad because of its obvious novelty, is perhaps sobering for some of us today. For Carlyle, the public was curious about foreign culture because of its very foreignness: that which we have no idea about – not that which we think we know, but are open to being surprised by. Yet Carlyle was in actual fact no mere cultural mediator, and for my part I am no cultural nostalgist or pessimist: I do not believe that we are any less inquisitive today about non-British stories – such as foreign literatures, for instance – than we were in the past. Moreover, Carlyle was not proffering his cultural expertise as such. In the public sphere, he did not play the roles of an academic providing potted insight or of dispassionate translator. Instead, Carlyle's impression of Jean Paul was increasingly aligned with his own background and vision for a more sentimental, moral, and less consumerist society. He introduced Jean Paul to the public in order to make a critical point about English letters. What is remarkable for Carlyle is that Jean Paul dares to depict himself as poor – even though he got by financially well enough. Carlyle complains of Britain: 'we have no Men of Letters now, but only Literary Gentleman.'<sup>31</sup> Jean Paul is the alternative we should aspire towards; he is someone with whom Carlyle identified. Although Carlyle's politics has its

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *German Romance*, two vols, Edinburgh and London 1827, II, p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Carlyle, 'Jean Paul Richter', *The Foreign Review and Continental Miscellany*, 5 (1830), 1–52 (2).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

notorious problems and clearly objectionable prejudices, he does offer us the model of a public intellectual and engagement in the public sphere that is about individual comment and interpretation, rather than the idea of a scientist-style expert who informs the public about unfamiliar content on a topic, the delineation or relevance of which is generally accepted. The role of the latter type of discursive intervention is more conceptually set in stone. Carlyle, in contrast, turned to German literature in order to talk about the British literary scene – and similarly (yet in an opposite move), we might speak about ‘British’ literature in order to bring German content to public attention.

Of course, there are also a (small) number of indisputably ‘German’ anniversaries that are of immediate interest to British publics, and as such do not demand an indirect arrival at German content via, say, commemoration of Laurence Sterne’s passing. 2020 marks 250 years since the births of Beethoven and Hegel, as two sufficiently prominent and generally recognisable cases in point. In my own research and media work to date, I wrote a travel story on Liechtenstein for *1843*, the cultural magazine of *The Economist*, taking 300 years of the country as an opportunity to tour the micro-state, interview its Crown Prince, and delve into the archives, bringing eighteenth-century German history to readers who probably associate the nation with global banks and low taxes.<sup>32</sup> Such was my second appropriation of an anniversary for the purposes of public engagement. My third example is the most obvious opportunity for German history for a British public, and so for our present purposes the least remarkable: an article for *The Observer*, in which I was to outline, 200 years later, in August 2019, the German world into which Prince Albert was born. Unfortunately, on the night before publication, after the piece had been approved and sub-edited, the ongoing story about Prince Andrew and his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein took a newsworthy twist. It quickly became inappropriate for a paper to publish a witty and generally benign historical commentary on the British Royal Family alongside an unfolding scandal that gripped and appalled readers in equal measure. Understandably, the Albert article was now relevant in the wrong way, and was rightly ‘commercially spiked’.<sup>33</sup>

In all these cases, I have risen to a familiar occasion, but – I hope – from a less familiar perspective. Anniversaries may appear wearisome only if we understand and commit to them as clichés. An alternative is to approach them as *commonplaces* in the classically rhetorical tradition – and thus as a chance to take audiences from the world they know into the discovery of German Studies, if only on a short detour.

<sup>32</sup> Seán Williams, ‘Liechtenstein, the Magic Principedom’, *1843 Magazine*, February/March 2019. The full article is available at <https://www.1843magazine.com/travel/liechtenstein-the-magic-prince-dom>.

<sup>33</sup> Seán Williams, ‘Celebrating the 200th Birthday of Prince Albert’, *History News Network*, 15.9.2019. A variant on the original article is available at <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/173043>.

## CENTENARY CAPITAL: GERMANS IN BRITISH CAPTIVITY DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

STEFAN MANZ (ASTON UNIVERSITY)

The centenary years of the First World War presented an opportunity to shape the remembrance patterns of the twentieth century's 'original catastrophe'. Who and what should be prioritised in memorialisation initiatives? This question was particularly poignant when it came to the role of minorities and non-combatants in the conflict. Colonials, ethnic minorities, women, civilians, political dissenters, and other groups had been underrepresented in twentieth-century commemoration patterns. The artwork that sparked off the centenary was just such a stock template – namely the poppy installation in the Tower of London. The work represented white British soldiers who had fallen on the Western front, eliding the complexity and globality of suffering.<sup>34</sup> Among public historians, David Olusoga was the most effective voice against this tunnel vision, most notably through his landmark TV series, *The World's War: Forgotten Soldiers of the Empire*, which highlighted participation and discrimination of non-white combatants in the conflict. All in all, however, public historians have tended to argue that the centenary commemoration was a lost opportunity when it came to embedding alternative narratives of the First World War.<sup>35</sup> Although valuable in itself, 'poppy vision' still dominates collective memory.

In spite of these limitations, the centenary years *did* present an opportunity for German Studies scholars to open up new themes and patterns of commemoration in UK and Commonwealth locations. The one group that had fallen through all cracks of twentieth-century commemoration were the 'enemies in the Empire', i.e. those civilians of enemy nationality who, in an age of mass migration, had emigrated and settled in Empire locations before 1914. They were mostly German, but also Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Bulgarian citizens. After the outbreak of war, they were declared 'enemy aliens' and as such constituted a threat to the safety of the realm: as potential spies, reservists, and collaborators. 30,000 men were interned without legal procedure in Britain, and a further 20,000 in overseas territories. Women and children were 'repatriated'. Although Britain was not the only empire pursuing these policies, it stood at the forefront of organising the first mass internment and global deportation operation of the twentieth century. This sits uneasily

<sup>34</sup> For example, the art critic Jonathan Jones found the installation 'fake, trite and inward-looking; a UKIP-style memorial', *The Guardian*, 28 October 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2014/oct/28/tower-of-london-poppies-ukip-remembrance-day>.

<sup>35</sup> Maggie Andrews, 'The First World War Centenary has been a Lost Opportunity', *BBC History Magazine*, 4 October 2018, 22.

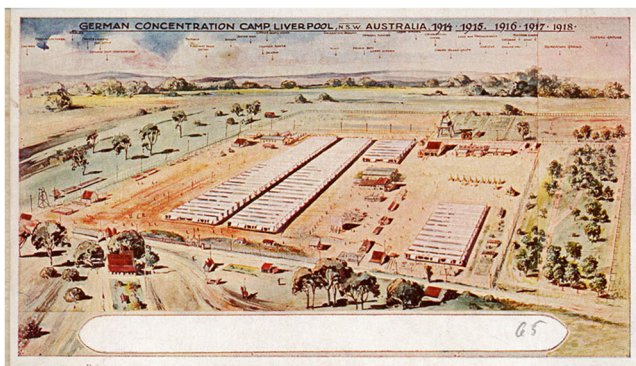


Figure 2. Holsworthy-Liverpool Concentration Camp near Sydney, Australia. © Dubotzki family.

within notions of British wartime heroism and suffering, providing one explanation for public amnesia. Another, more important explanation is the brutalisation of internment during the Holocaust, overshadowing other incarnations of similar policies in the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

And this was exactly the potential risk of my project. As a scholar with a German background, who was I to point the finger, in public, at British wartime policies of internment and victimisation of Germans? The last thing I wanted was to cosy up to, and even seem to corroborate ‘arguments’ relativising the Holocaust. The British ambassador to Germany, Sir Nevile Henderson, paid a visit to Hermann Göring in 1939, confronting him about Nazi concentration camps. Göring went to his bookshelf, pulled out the ‘K’ volume of an encyclopaedia and read: ‘*Konzentrationslager*... used by the British in the South African War.’<sup>37</sup> A string of post-war Holocaust apologists have continued to regurgitate this false logic. Images, such as the painting of a camp by a prisoner in 1918 (see Figure 2), could be easily exploited to that end. When I started to show them in public talks and exhibitions, I was acutely aware of the potential minefield. In all public-facing outputs I thus stressed historicist singularity and incomparability, and pursued consistent transnational contextualisation, all in plain language. This strategy has (so far!) helped me to avoid any backlash. The gasps and comments these images draw are caused by genuine surprise and are not related to an ostensibly revisionist agenda.

The first step was primary research, though. A collaborative grant from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung allowed me and my co-author Panikos Panayi

<sup>36</sup> Stefan Manz, Panikos Panayi, and Matthew Stibbe (eds), *Internment during the First World War. A Mass Global Phenomenon*, Abingdon 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Aidan Forth, *Barbed-Wire Imperialism. Britain’s Empire of Camps 1876–1903*, Oakland, CA 2017, p. 213.

to combine our research interests<sup>38</sup> and conduct research on a global scale, producing a monograph for Oxford University Press.<sup>39</sup> The source material emanating from this research was too good not to be used for public engagement. Internees produced an astounding number of texts, cultural performances, personal memories, and artefacts such as bone carvings and drawings that lay forgotten in museum repositories and archives. Local stakeholders simply did not know what to do with these resources since many were in German, often handwritten and thus difficult to read, and even more difficult to contextualise due to a scarcity of academic groundwork and cross-sector collaboration. If former camp sites were remembered at all, they were commemorated as purely local manifestations of the Great War – without any awareness of their global implications. My challenge was to ‘translate’ recent scholarship on the globality<sup>40</sup> and totality<sup>41</sup> of warfare into all aspects of my public engagement activities.

The geographical hub of my global impact activities has been Hawick in the Scottish Borders. The adjacent Stobs camp was the biggest internment facility in mainland Britain during the First World War, holding up to 4,600 prisoners, most of whom were German. The internees initially comprised both military prisoners of war and civilian ‘enemy aliens’. In mid-1916, the latter group was deported to the Knockaloe camp on the Isle of Man, which was the biggest camp in the Empire with 23,000 internees. Stobs continued to be used for military prisoners. Today the site is of global archaeological significance, being the best-preserved World War I prisoner of war camp in the world. This assessment had come out of my global research. It strengthened and motivated close cooperation with local stakeholders, in particular Archaeology Scotland, Hawick Museum, Live Borders, and the Heritage Hub Hawick. These partners were equally keen to capitalise on the centenary years in order to increase their visitor and participation numbers.

Cooperation was facilitated by two Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) impact grants. The first of these was a sub-award from Gateways to the First World War, which was one of five major WWI public engagement centres during the centenary years. The sub-award mainly funded a study-weekend for the general public in June 2016. Over 100 people gathered in the Heritage Hub Hawick and the local cultural centre.

<sup>38</sup> Panikos Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain. German Civilian and Combatant Internees during the First World War*, Manchester 2012; Stefan Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora. The ‘Greater German Empire’ 1871–1914*, New York 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Stefan Manz and Panikos Panayi, *Enemies in the Empire. Civilian Internment in the British Empire during the First World War*, Oxford 2020; supported by a Gerda Henkel Stiftung collaborative grant AZ05/V/14, Aston University, and De Montfort University, May 2014 to August 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, Volume 1, *Global War*, Cambridge 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (eds), *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front 1914–1918*, Cambridge 2006.

They were composed of Borders residents interested in their local history, as well as visitors from across Britain who were descendants of internees or nineteenth-century immigrants. Short papers by academics and local stakeholders were followed by a show-and-tell event. Locally held artefacts from public and private collections were displayed and interpreted by specialists. There followed an excursion to the camp site, led by specialists from Archaeology Scotland with supporting information from academics.<sup>42</sup>

The second grant was AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement, awarded for a proposal entitled 'The German Diaspora during World War I: Remembering Internment Camps in Britain and the Commonwealth.'<sup>43</sup> It was more substantial and allowed for a diversification of impact pathways in terms of user groups and geographical scope. Comprising various strands, a sub-project on theatre was conducted by the co-investigating team from Edinburgh Napier University. Anne Schwan, Head of English and Drama, led a team of producers, actors, and musicians in Scotland to recreate a 'Lustspielabend', which had originally been performed in Stobs a hundred years earlier. The event was based on a printed programme that I had found stored away in a box in Hawick Museum's repository. It included three light musical pieces by Jacques Offenbach, Johann Strauss, and Giacomo Meyerbeer, and two 'Lustspiele': Ludwig Fulda's *Unter vier Augen* and Heinrich von Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug*. In our twenty-first century adaptation, the plays were performed in English translation in three performances in Glasgow Cottier Theatre, Edinburgh Morningside Theatre, and the Heart of Hawick cultural centre, to packed houses. A backstory written by stage and TV writer Charity Trimm was woven into the original script, representing our research findings in artistic form. The programme notes contained the German original programme text, its English translation, a translated contemporaneous review from the camp newspaper, *Stobsiade*, as well as short contextual articles written by the project team.<sup>44</sup> The original programme is now on permanent display, with explanatory notes, in Hawick Museum.

The second strand of the AHRC Follow-on project necessitated cross-sector cooperation between researchers, curators, and a designer, and produced a mobile exhibition: 'Behind the Wire. Civilian Internment in the British Empire 1914–1919'. Its eighteen panels cover a range of topics such as camp conditions, cultural activities, health, education, escape, and the internment of British citizens in Germany (which was a lower-

<sup>42</sup> Hawick's German Prisoners. Stobs Internment Camp in Global Context, 1914–1919. Study weekend for the general public, Heritage Hub Hawick, 18/19 June 2016, <https://www.gatewaysfww.org.uk/events/stobs-study-day>.

<sup>43</sup> <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FR002649%2F1>.

<sup>44</sup> Various media reports, for example, BBC link 27 February 2018, no author given: 'German prisoner of war theatre show revived', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-43210547>; Kirsteen Paterson, 'Century old Stobs Camp PoW plays to be adapted for modern stage', *The National*, 27 February 2018.

scale affair in terms of numbers and operations). The last panel, 'Legacy and Meaning', highlights the ongoing relevance of the topic, pointing to contemporary examples of civilian confinement such as immigration removal centres in the UK, refugee camps in the Mediterranean, and camps for the Uighur Muslim minority in China. The exhibition was opened in November 2018 as part of Armistice Day commemorations in Hawick Museum and in the Miriam Makeba Auditorium in Pretoria, South Africa. It helps local communities that hosted internment camps not only to recover this aspect of their local history, but also to do so within the global and transnational framework established by academic research. Each thematic panel combines photographic and textual examples from around the world, creating a clear notion of globality and building historico-cultural bridges between Commonwealth countries and Germany.<sup>45</sup> In the course of 2018 (the armistice centenary), and 2019 (the Versailles centenary), the exhibition has toured the world in Newcastle Public Library (UK), Oldcastle Public Library (Ireland), KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg (South Africa), and Thomas More Gallery, Saskatoon (Canada). It also garnered interest in the United States, where German 'alien enemies' had been interned in camps in Oglethorpe, Georgia, and Fort Douglas, Utah. Fort Douglas Military Museum in Salt Lake City and Utah State University have both shown the exhibition.

The exhibition went hand in hand with the production of education packs for Scottish primary schools,<sup>46</sup> for South African primary schools,<sup>47</sup> and for convicted offenders in Scottish prisons.<sup>48</sup> For the latter group, the materials allow for historical and transnational reflection on imprisonment. For primary school pupils, the pack allows for critical questions about minority discrimination, as well as exposure to some German-language sources with translations. Adapting the resource for South Africa was a particular challenge since the concept of 'minority' carries very different notions in this ethno-cultural context. The education packs are crucial for widening the age-range of beneficiaries. Standard activities such as public talks and exhibitions mainly attract older audiences, whilst education packs draw in young children. In Pietermaritzburg, the museum's very active Education Department uses my education pack in workshops for schools

<sup>45</sup> Stefan Manz and Rosemary Hannay (eds), exhibition catalogue *Behind the Wire*, Hawick 2018. Various media reports, for example, Shân Ross, 'Exhibition on First World War Internment Camps', *The Scotsman*, 27 February 2018; (no author), 'Exhibition sheds light on life in British war camps', *Daily Mail*, 4 November 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Rosemary Hannay and Stefan Manz, *Minorities on the Homefront. 'Enemy Alien' Internment in the British Empire 1914–1919*, Education Learning Resource – Primary 7 and older, <http://www.stobscamp.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/WWI-Internment-Education-Pack.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> With Anne Samson, <http://www.stobscamp.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Stobs-South-African-Education-Pack-1914-1919.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Rosemary Hannay, Stefan Manz, and Anne Schwan, *Minorities on the Homefront. 'Enemy Alien' Internment in the British Empire 1914–1919*, Education Learning Resource for use in Scottish Prison Learning Centres, not publicly available due to restrictions.



across KwaZulu-Natal province. The theme also lends itself to university-level teaching, having sparked lively discussions in my classes based on a range of original sources.

The problem of general accessibility to primary sources was tackled through large-scale digitisation and translations of German original texts into English. Both tasks in this project strand were undertaken by David Sutherland.<sup>49</sup> He translated all thirty-nine editions of the camp newspaper *Stobsiade* into English and presented them online in a user-friendly way, which allows for 'jumping' between scanned originals and their translations. For the first time, public and academic stakeholders who do not read German have access to a WWI camp newspaper originally written in German by Germans and for Germans, that of the German Prisoner of War Camp at Stobs in Scotland 1915–1919.<sup>50</sup> The *Stobsiade* is a unique source which contains contributions by internees on various aspects of camp life, as well as poems, short stories and factual pieces on science, nature, culture, and other areas. The most striking feature of its pages is the humorous tone. Closer reading between the lines, however, reveals that this was a strategy to express trauma and suffering despite rigorous censorship. The infamous 'barbed-wire disease', a term coined by a Swiss psychiatrist and camp inspector,<sup>51</sup> was a depressive mental state caused by a mixture of boredom, forced closeness with fellow inmates, isolation from family and friends, sexual frustration, and culturally engendered notions of shame.<sup>52</sup>

The final strand of the project provides a sustainable base for future activities. The Internment Research Centre (IRC) is located in the Heritage Hub Hawick.<sup>53</sup> It was opened during Armistice Day commemorations 2018 with thematic contributions and stakeholder speeches. The German Consul General to Scotland, Jens-Peter Voss, stressed: 'the new research centre will make this material available to the general public and thus actively contribute to an even better understanding among the general public of Great Britain and Germany.' Two scholars from Germany introduced their research on the Regensburg camp, which held French internees, emphasising the transnational dimensions of suffering. The Heritage Hub Hawick now has a special collection containing primary material on internment worldwide. An archivist on my AHRC project integrated these materials into the archive catalogue.<sup>54</sup> The IRC continues to collect pertinent material and is the only centre of its kind in the world. Material that was globally scattered or inaccessible is now coming

<sup>49</sup> Dominik Richert, *The Kaiser's Reluctant Conscript. My Experiences in the War 1914–1918*, tr. David Sutherland, Barnsley 2012.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.stobsiade.org/>. The subtitle of the *Stobsiade* was 'Stobser Zeitung'.

<sup>51</sup> A. L. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease: A Psychological Study of the Prisoner of War*, London 1919.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Feltman, *The Stigma of Surrender: German Prisoners, British Captors, and Manhood in the Great War and Beyond*, Chapel Hill, NC 2015.

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.stobscamp.org/irc/>.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.calmview.eu/HUBCAT/CalmView/>.

to light and being collated in a focused and digitally accessible way. The primary sources are complemented with a specialist library collection containing titles on internment throughout history. This helps archive users contextualise primary materials. Scholars interested in internment, in German culture, and in British–German relations will find ample material in the Internment Research Centre. The interdisciplinary potential is immense, encapsulating cultural studies, archaeology, history, medicine, art history, theatre and literary studies, international relations, and digital history. Throughout the project I have cooperated closely with similar initiatives elsewhere to generate synergies and widest possible reach.<sup>55</sup>

Presenting these various project outputs to the general public has meant constructing a specific memory texture around them. Two radically different representations would have been possible. The first would have selectively presented original material focusing on suffering, liberty deprivation, bad conditions in some camps, and those negative inmate utterances that complained about virtually everything. That representation would have fed neatly into arguments of German civilian suffering and victimhood in twentieth-century warfare. The other option would have been to focus solely on sources reflecting good treatment, cultural activities, and British fair-play. That representation, in contrast, would have fed neatly into British self-perceptions of having run a liberal empire, fought a ‘just war’, and treated minorities well throughout its history. The project outputs navigate between these two poles and also capture the grey shades in between. Although suffering occurred, conditions were generally humane. The exhibition panel on music, for example, gives an insight into a lively creative culture in the camps (having led to criticism that I ‘sanitise suffering’), but at the same time contains a quote by the organist of Cork Catholic Cathedral, Aloys Fleischmann, who wrote in Oldcastle Camp: ‘It is of no significance whether an individual is healthy or ill, dies a natural death, opens his veins or hangs himself where thousands are oppressed and worn down by their fate, robbed of their livelihoods, torn from their families in all corners of the globe, all vegetating like packs of different animals behind barbed wire.’<sup>56</sup>

By representing differing sources and grey shades, the outputs do not lend themselves to simplistic instrumentalisation such as Holocaust relativisation on the German side, or justification of ‘hostile environment’ immigration policies on the part of the British. Rather, the outputs

<sup>55</sup> For example, around Knockaloe Camp, Isle of Man, <https://www.knockaloe.im/>; Raikeswood Camp, North Yorkshire, <https://skiptonww1camp.co.uk/>; Lofthouse Park Camp, Yorkshire, <https://ruhlebenlofthouse.com/>; Das Regensburger Kriegsgefangenenlager, Regensburg, Germany, <https://mitten-im-krieg-1914-18.net/> (all accessed 5 June 2020); Oldcastle Camp, Ireland, with Oldcastle Public Library; Fort Napier Camp, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, with KwaZulu-Natal Museum.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Ruth Fleischmann, ‘Aloys Fleischmann. Bavarian Musician and Civilian Prisoner of War 1916–1919’, in *Oldcastle Camp. An Illustrated History*, ed. Tom French, Meath 2018, p. 156.

present the complexities of the internment experience in a transnational framework. Suffering was experienced by prisoners worldwide, no matter what their nationality. The first panel states in bold letters that the exhibition is 'dedicated to the memory of more than one million civilians of all nationalities who found themselves behind barbed wire during the First World War.' The outputs aim to generate empathy based on humanity and not on nationality. Post-activity feedback has been full of comments such as: 'everyone was a mother's son regardless', or 'this was enlightening, [I've] only ever heard of British internees'. The project thus builds understanding and cultural bridges between two countries that are currently drifting apart in the wider political climate. The centenary years have provided efficient leverage for dissemination due to heightened awareness and general openness towards First World War themes.

#### CONCLUSION

Each of the three commentaries above considers the practical appropriation of anniversaries in different ways, in collaboration with various partners, and for a diverse range of audiences. Collectively, they demonstrate the value of 'anniversary capital' for both German Studies and, we hope, for improved public understanding. Through detailed descriptions of specific activities that colleagues have undertaken, we are reminded how anniversaries are ready-made opportunities for impact and engagement (even if the actual cultural contexts of those opportunities are not so failsafe as the certainty of the calendar suggests). Nevertheless, we also see that to work effectively as such 'oven-ready' public engagement, anniversaries must be prepared by academics' creative opportunism, collaboration, and a broad conception of imparting knowledge that acknowledges it is conveyed and indeed created by more than information alone. Lähnemann's deployment of Playmobil's Luther figurine was as affective as it was effective, while Manz suggests that human empathy can map out a path towards better critical awareness. Williams shows that playing to the familiar may be a route into the lesser-known. Just as public understanding is not improved solely by informative content, nor is it necessarily enhanced by radical originality. Phrased thus, engagement and impact begin to sound strikingly similar to the everyday genesis of traditional scholarship! And perhaps this is the point: impact can itself be understood as a form, as well as a result, of legitimate academic research.

Inevitably, the three case studies also raise questions. Alongside practical queries, perhaps about cultivating mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships, time management, or navigating the day-to-day politics of our home, our funders', or our partners' organisations, many colleagues will share a set of fundamental concerns about engagement and impact more generally. Some will question whether engagement and impact really do

constitute 'academic' work, and they may ask who should be practising such activities, or what sorts of intervention amount to worthwhile investment of academic resources. However, the proper types of outputs arising from scholarly effort have been contested for as long as universities have existed. What has changed in recent years is that governments and organisations now incentivise impact, and so institutional recognition and pressure, and managerial support and interference have increased also. In discussions about the changing context of (British) Higher Education, it is important to note that the REF's definition of impact is value-neutral, meaning that no one substantive conception of academia is embedded into the assessment criteria – formally, in any case. What is more, colleagues may correctly point out that engagement and impact are conceptually not one and the same; and the above commentaries do not argue for the precise 'impacts' that will be identified in their Case Study templates that in time will be submitted for the REF exercise (and subsequently made available online). Such differentiation, like all considerations of what the academic endeavour is or should be, go far beyond the remit of the present article, and are not exclusive to anniversaries. But that is a good point with which to close. Anniversaries pose all these questions in common with other prompts for engagement and impact, yet are the obvious chances to participate in the latter. Thus in both positive and negative senses, anniversaries are a useful lens for observing and opining on emergent practices in our discipline – from pragmatic perspectives, as emphasised here, or from more historical and ideological standpoints.