

PhDs with Social Purpose: Royal Holloway's new PhDs by Practice in Public History

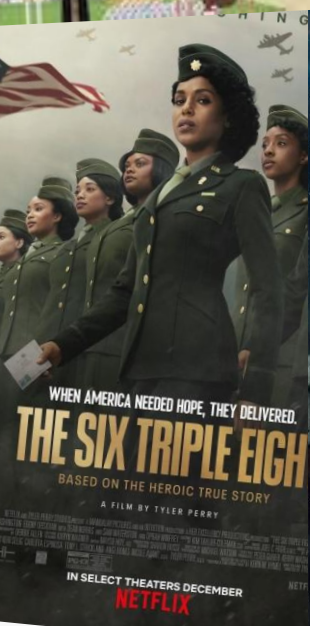
Dr Matthew Smith
Royal Holloway, University of London



What is Public History?



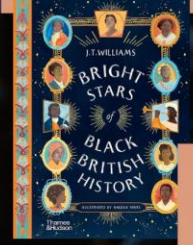
What is Public History?



Author
J.T. WILLIAMS
13 April 2024
1:30pm - 3:30pm

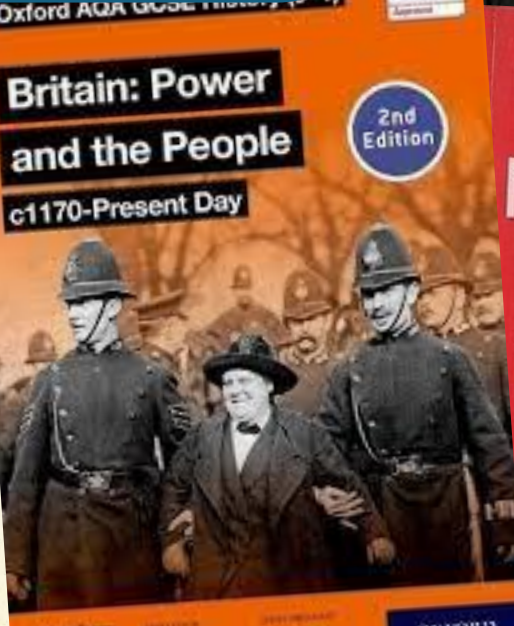
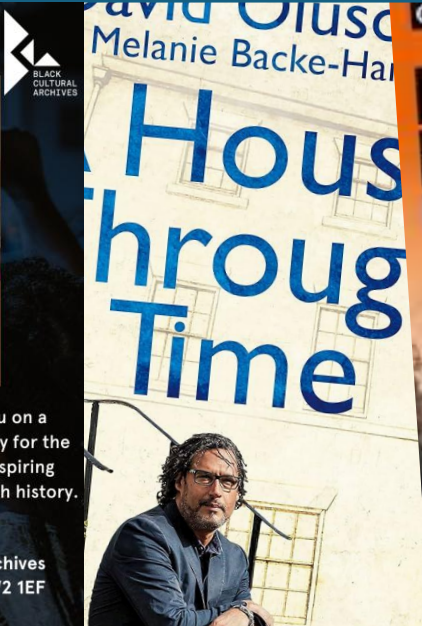


WRITING WORKSHOP



Author J.T. Williams guides you on a creative writing workshop journey for the entire family. Don't miss this inspiring opportunity to connect with British history. Suitable for ages 9+.

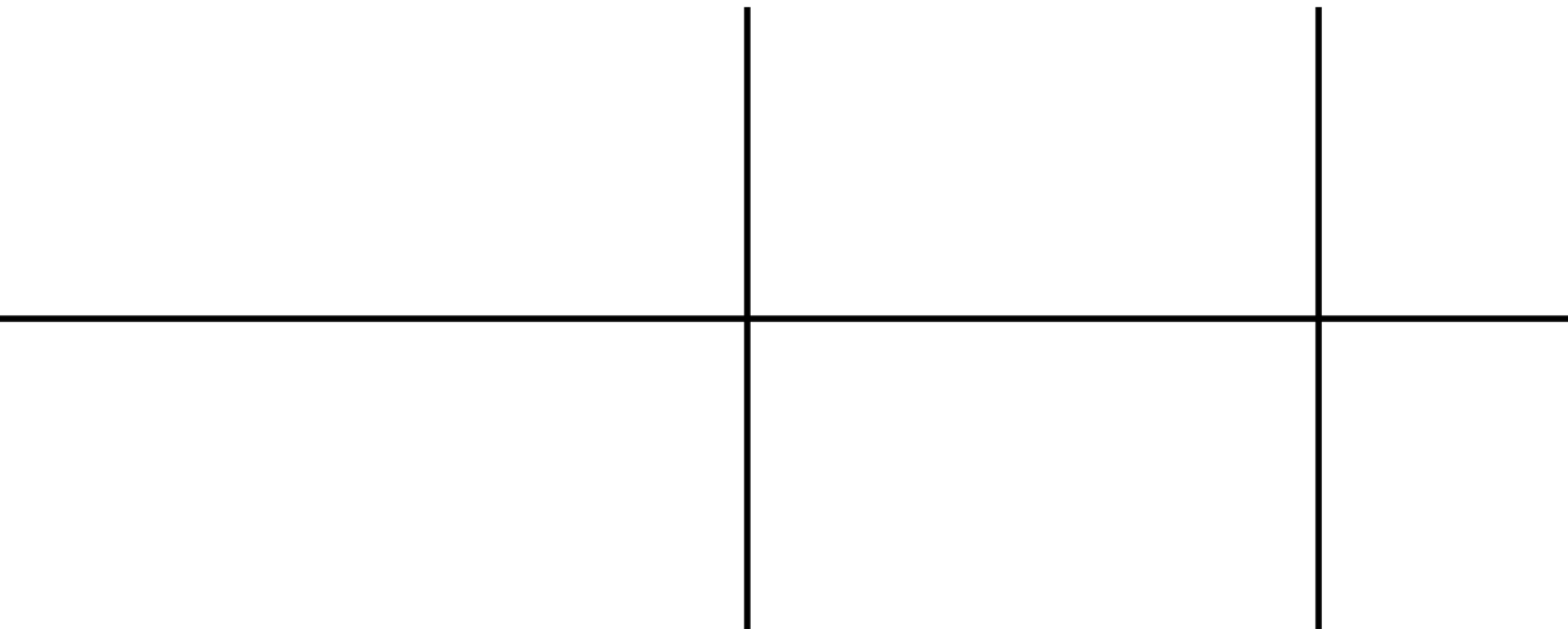
Black Cultural Archives
1 Windrush Square, SW2 1EF



1978

2009

2023

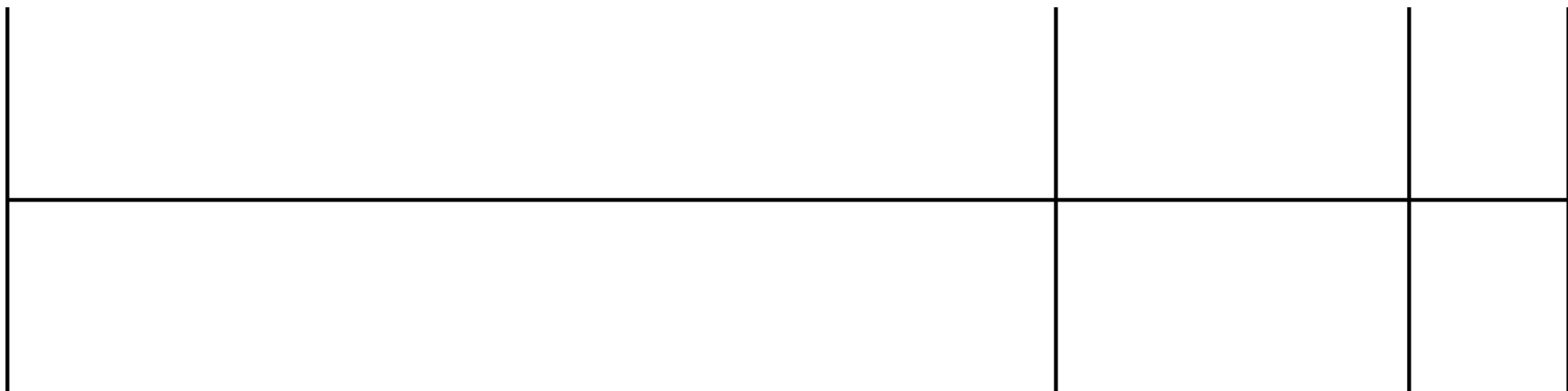


1886

1978

2009

2023





“The Founder believes that the education of women should not be exclusively regulated by the tradition and method of former ages; but that it should be founded on those studies and sciences which the experience of modern times has shown to be most valuable, and the best adapted to meet the intellectual and social requirements of the students.”

Deed of Foundation, 1883

Motivations

- An ideal vehicle for social purpose challenge-led research
- Increasing the attractiveness of CDAs for our partners
- Equipping our PhD candidates with broader skills and experience





Context The Equal Franchise Act 1928 marks the moment the UK can be deemed a full democracy.

Challenge Lacks the public recognition of the earlier Representation of the People Act 1918.

CDA Project Commemorating the Equal Franchise Act 1928.

Context TLA has been a sector leader when it comes to archiving collections from diverse communities across London.

Challenge How can Engagement and Learning teams facilitate engagement with underrepresented communities?

CDA Project ‘Windows, Mirrors, and Greenhouses’: developing an inclusive archive-community engagement methodology.



Context Black British History remains underrepresented and siloed in the UK school curriculum and textbooks.

Challenge BCA, despite its national importance, is a small charity with limited resources and research capacity.

CDA Project Black British History, Inclusive Teaching and Curriculum Reform.

Process

- Years of relationship building, listening and dialogue.
- Co-design of proposals and an equal role in recruitment.
- Refinement of proposals with our selected candidate.

Challenges

- Short timeframe for candidate recruitment.
- Institutional flux and staff changes.
- Coordinating supervision.



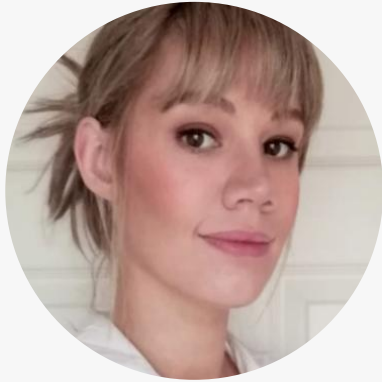
“For partner organisations, the PhD by Practice model ensures they will get concrete public engagement outputs based on in-depth research in their collections. The student is not under undertaking research for research’s sake, valuable though that is, but with an eye to its use in furthering the strategic aims of the organisation. This is mutually beneficial as it should also assist the student’s future employability by providing real-life experience in the workplace.”

Dr Mari Takayanagi, Senior Archivist, UK Parliamentary Archives



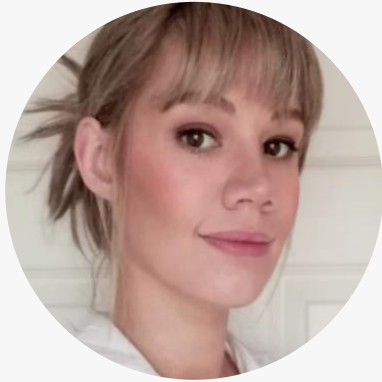
“The PhD by Practice model helps ensure solid research foundations for any public engagement programmes. It provides a brilliant opportunity for students to shape institutional practice and to be part of national moments, allowing them to tangibly witness the impact of their work.”

Vicky Iglkowski-Broad, Principal Records Specialist, Diverse Histories,
The National Archives



“When I completed my MA, I knew I wanted to pursue a PhD at some point, as I love the process of researching and writing about history. But since I was already established in a career I enjoyed within the museums and heritage sector, I also wanted my PhD to complement and enhance that path, rather than requiring me to start afresh in a new field.”

Amy Swainston, Techne PhD candidate



“The 'by-practice' element of the PhD was perfect for me, because it offered the opportunity to build up a portfolio, disseminating my research publicly in a variety of ways throughout the project's lifespan. Coming from a public history background, to me the prospect of engaging wide audiences in the research I would be undertaking made this project even more worthwhile.”

Amy Swainston, Techne PhD candidate



“This model is valuable to The London Archives as an opportunity to test out complex and relevant new practices in a real environment, whilst simultaneously developing the valuable knowledge and skills of our team.”

Emma Markiewicz, Director, The London Archives



“... the research that I am doing is directly responding to tangible needs, threats and opportunities in the archive sector. I can clearly see how the research serves the strategic needs of an institution that I care about and believe in. On a personal level the practice element gives me a chance to pause and reflect on what I have spent the last decade of my life doing. And better still I get to do this reflection with expert guidance and in a wider intellectual and social milieu.”

Tom Furber, Techne PhD candidate and Engagement and Learning Officer,
The London Archives



“CDAs are rewarding to supervise, and the research conducted can spotlight certain collections. ... A PhD by Practice, however, is even more beneficial to BCA as the practical outputs can form part of our learning and engagement portfolio. As a small charity, we simply don’t have the time to research and produce the quantity of resources we would wish, or to share research outputs with a broad audience.”

Dr Ayshah Johnston, Learning and Engagement Manager,
Black Cultural Archives



“I had been sent the studentship opportunity at a time when I felt quite indecisive about whether I wanted to pursue doctoral study. However, because this was not a traditional PhD and I would be able to work directly with the Black Cultural Archives and create concrete outputs, I was keen to apply. A PhD by Practice will allow me to support BCA in terms of their research capacity, but also to learn from their team about how to engage with teachers and pupils who deserve to know the histories BCA preserves.”

Hannah Francis, Prospective Techne PhD candidate

Outlook

- Less overall funding and a more competitive landscape.
- Challenges facing universities and our partners.
- AHRC Landscape awards.

Thank you

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Find me on **LinkedIn**



