

Biographies of We Are Bristol History Commission Members

List correct as of December 2021

Professor Tim Cole – Professor of Social History at the University of Bristol (Chair)



Tim is Professor of Social History and Director of Brigstow Institute, Department of History (Historical Studies). His core research has focused on the Holocaust landscapes - both historical and memory landscapes, and he supervises a wide range of PhD and MPhil topics in Holocaust Studies, environmental and landscape history, public history and contemporary social history.

Tim specialises in social and environmental histories, historical geographies and digital humanities and he also works within the creative economy.

Tim is a co-investigator on Bristol and Bath Creative R&D working with other studio residents, Stand+Stare, in the company Mayfly Sound at the Watershed. He is particularly interested in exploring how traditional arts and humanities research strengths can be unlocked with, and for, the creative industries. Tim's own interests in interdisciplinary and co-produced research have led to heading up the Brigstow Institute at the University of Bristol that fosters new interdisciplinary and co-produced research partnerships. As well as facilitating these new research teams, Tim is involved in researching what processes enable these new ways of working.

Some of Tim's research projects/books include:

About Britain: [A Journey of Seventy Years and 1,345 Miles](#), book (2021)

[Holocaust Landscapes](#), book (2016)

[Traces of the Holocaust: Journeying in and out of the Ghettos](#), book (2011)

[Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto](#), book (2003)

[Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler : how History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold](#), book (1999)

[USC Shoah Foundation, Center for Advanced Genocide Research](#)

[Imagining Regulation Differently: Co-creating for Engagement](#), book (2020)

[Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain](#), book (2010)

Dr Madge Dresser, F.R.H.S., R.S.A. – Honorary Professor in Historical Studies at the University of Bristol.

Dr Madge Dresser has lived in Bristol since 1972 and retired as Associate Professor in History at the University of the West of England in 2016. She has since been appointed Honorary Professor in Historical Studies at the University of Bristol. She has published and broadcast widely on various aspects of Britain and America's social and cultural history including the history of Bristol in which she is passionately interested. She has worked with people and organisations outside academia including local history groups, schools, family history societies, and various community centres in Bristol and further afield.



She was a founder member of Bristol Broadsides in the 1980s, a worker-writer cooperative which published local writers and alternative histories of the city. She has advised museums, public bodies and voluntary organisations throughout the world. Her Bristol-related publications include various edited works and articles on aspects of Bristol's religious life; *Black and White on the Buses*; *The Making of Modern Bristol*; 'Peoples Housing in Bristol' in *Bristol's Other History*; *Slavery Obscured: the Social History of the Slave Trade in Bristol*; *Ethnic Minorities and the City: Bristol 1000-2000*, *Pero's Afterlife: Remembering an enslaved African in Bristol* (in Gretchen Gerzina's *Britain's Black Past*), "The elusive Lady Apsley: rethinking a post war M.P." in *Women's History Review*, and profiles of Thomas Daniel and Sarah Guppy for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Dr Shawn Sobers – Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice at University of the West of England (UWE)



Dr Shawn Sobers is Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice at University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. Shawn was promoted to Professor in November 2021. He is director of the Critical Race and Culture Research Network, teaches into BA and MA Photography, Journalism, Curating and Research Methods, and supervises PhDs on a range of topics including - activism, working with archives, Black cultural expression, photography and national identity, and African cinema.

As a researcher Shawn has carried out a wide range of projects spanning diverse topics; legacies of the transatlantic slavery, African presence in Georgian and Victorian Britain, Rastafari language and culture, creative citizenship in social media, and Ethiopian connections with the city of Bath. He is Director of the 'Freedom in the City: Festival of Learning', and trustee of Fairfield House, the former residence of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I. As a filmmaker and photographer, Shawn's work has been exhibited and screened internationally, and he has directed documentaries for BBC1, ITV and Channel 4.

Dr Joanna Burch-Brown – Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Bristol

Joanna Burch-Brown is a Senior Lecturer and Director of Teaching for Philosophy at the University of Bristol. She also directs the Fulbright Institute's most popular summer school. Her innovative model of research and teaching has empowered young people in Britain and the US to develop their own initiatives addressing concerns that matter in their communities. One student reports that her courses "truly changed my global perspective" and another says "I've learned a lot about how I want to conduct myself in my life after this." Another says "It has empowered me ... I know I can make a difference".



From 2016-2020, she contributed to campaigns to change how Bristol memorializes figures like Edward Colston, and to help Bristol acknowledge and understand its historic role in transatlantic slavery. She has worked with institutional leaders across the city and internationally to find balanced ways to address difficult history and its contemporary legacies. She has a strong commitment to democracy and participation, and a particular interest in bridging between different viewpoints and promoting understanding of the positive intentions of people on all sides of the debate.

Estella Tincknell – Associate Professor in Film and Culture at University of the West of England(UWE)



Estella Tincknell is Associate Professor in Film and Culture at UWE and has been a Labour councillor for Lockleaze since 2013, during which time she sat on the Boards of the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership, Destination Bristol, Watershed and Bristol Old Vic Theatre. Estella was a Bristol City Councillor until May 2021.

She is a founding member of WAM (Women, Aging, Media), an international network of scholars and activists who combine research and publication with social impact.

She has published widely in the areas of aging and media and in British film and television, and was also co-editor of *The Soundtrack*, a journal of music and the moving image (2012-16).

Dr Edson Burton - writer, historian, programme-curator and performer

Dr Edson Burton is a writer, historian, programme-curator and performer based in Bristol. Writing across mediums his work includes poetry (Seasoned 2008), theatre (Anansi & the Grand Prize 2019), and radio dramas including R4 listening highlights Armour of Immanuel (2007), the Chosen One (2009), Deacon (2017) & (2019).

Between 1998-2003 Edson was the lead curator for Black History Month Bristol as part of his role as Kuumba Centre librarian.

He has curated the Arnolfini take over Afrometropolis 2017, The Late Night Blues for the Architecture Centre (2018) and Bristol's Got Soul for Colston Hall. A long-standing associate of Bristol's Watershed Cinema, Edson has curated the highly regarded Afrofuturist season (2014). Since then he has become an active member of the programming and collective, Come the Revolution, supported by Watershed Cinema.

His academic interests include: Bristol and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Black History in the USA, Cultural continuities between Africa & the New World. He has been a consultant and coordinator for a range of history projects in Bristol including most recently a study of Bristol's Old Market ward Vice & Virtue (2014) and Black South West Network's Race Through the Generations (2017). *Photo credit Claudio Alhers*



Nigel Costley - Regional Secretary for South West TUC

Nigel Costley has been the Regional Secretary of the South West TUC since 1996. This involves representing the TUC and the trade union movement, promoting TUC campaigns and supporting the work of individual unions.

Prior to joining the TUC, Nigel was the elected officer for the Graphical Paper and Media Union based in Gloucester, covering Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Hereford and Worcester. Over the 15 years in this position he was involved with the massive changes in the printing and design industries.

As a former apprentice compositor, Nigel retrained several times over to adapt to computerised typesetting, and new electronic publishing systems. He took up a number of part-time and distance learning courses leading to a Master of Science degree in Training and Human Resource Management with Leicester University and is currently completing his thesis for a PhD with the University of the West of England.

Nigel has held many positions, representing trade unions, including Board Member of the South West Regional Development Agency and Governor of the University of the West of England.

Nigel was founder and Vice-Chair of Equality South West an umbrella body to champion equal opportunities and is the organiser of the annual Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.

Passionate about social history, Nigel is the author of a book called [West Country Rebels](#) and a book on the 1913 China Clay Strike in Cornwall.

Professor Steve Poole, Professor of History and Heritage at University of the West of England (UWE)

Steve Poole researches histories of protest, popular politics and the criminal law in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. As Director of UWE's Regional History Centre and editor of its journal, the *Regional Historian* since 2004, much of Steve's work has focussed on histories of Bristol and its region.



Steve is chair of the John Thelwall Society and sits on the editorial committees of *Southern History*, *Bath History* and *Somerset & Dorset Notes and Queries*. His other published work includes studies of capital trials for sodomy in eighteenth century Bristol and the once common practice of hanging some criminals at the scene of their crime. He has an interest in the politics of commemoration and public memory and has written on radical attitudes to statues and memorials in two recent essays, most recently for *Patterns of Prejudice* (2020). Steve also works in the field of digital heritage interpretation, applying the practice of history from below to sites of heritage through collaboration with the Bristol-based Splash & Ripple and Satsymph. He is currently leading a major three-year research project for the Economic and Social Research Council on crowd behaviour and mobilisation in the reform riots of 1831.

Some of Professor Steve Poole's work includes:

A City Built Upon the Water: Maritime Bristol 1730-1900 (2013)

Bristol From Below: Law, Authority and Protest in a Georgian City (2017), co-written with Nick Rogers.

A second book co-written with Nick, *Bad Blood in Georgian Bristol: The Murder of Sir John Dineley Goodere* will be published in 2022.

Previous Committee Members

David Olusoga – Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester

Councillor Helen Godwin – Former Cabinet Member for Women, Families and Homes at Bristol City Council