

## Emeritus Professor Malcolm Chase

Colleagues will be sorry to learn of the death on 29 February 2020 of Malcolm Chase, Emeritus Professor of Social History.

Malcolm Chase read History at the University of York before studying for an MA (1979) and a DPhil at Sussex (1984) with JFC Harrison, the pioneer of 'history from below', the historical narrative which attempts to account for historical events from the perspective of ordinary people, with an emphasis on the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the poor, and the nonconformists. Malcolm joined the Department of Adult Continuing Education in 1982 and ran the University's Centre for Adult Education in Middlesbrough as well as directing the BA in Continuing Studies. In 2002 he was appointed Head of the School of Continuing Education. He moved to the School of History in 2005, following the restructuring of Continuing Education, becoming Chair in Social History in 2009. He retired from the University in 2019.

A focus upon labour history, political radicalism, and the perspective of the people rather than their leaders persisted throughout Malcolm's highly distinguished career. He is well known for his work on British labour history and political radicalism during the long nineteenth century, for example, his study of agrarian reformer Thomas Spence (*The People's Farm: English Radical Agrarianism, 1775-1840*) and his innovative and thought-provoking study of trade unionism, *Early Trade Unionism: Fraternity, Skill and the Politics of Labour*, which was widely credited with reinvigorating the academic study of labour history in the UK. Perhaps his most distinctive and pioneering work, however, was his research into Chartism, the movement for political reform and fundamental citizenship rights that dominated the British political scene during the middle of the nineteenth century. In particular, his landmark study, *Chartism: A New History*, published in 2007, in which he presented a subtle and very thoughtful synthesis of the knowledge and insights he had spent his academic career developing.

Malcolm was a popular and highly dedicated teacher. He took great pleasure from teaching and from learning from his students, always looking for innovative ways to engage attention and enthusiasm and to communicate ideas – even, on occasion, through the medium of song. He was hugely respected as a PhD supervisor and mentor, and gave his time generously to colleagues, particularly those starting out in their career, to whom his advice was thoughtful and encouraging, and on whose behalf his advocacy was, if necessary, robust and unstinting.

Malcolm's enthusiasm for teaching, and for learning from his students, also informed his keen interest throughout his career in what is now known as educational engagement and outreach, working with local historians and enthusiasts amongst the general public to develop and deliver workshops, courses and articles as well as popular media collaborative projects (including BBC1's *Who Do You Think You Are?* and ITV1's *Britain's Secret Houses*) to bring the joy of historical discovery and narrative to as many people as possible, in the belief that such knowledge helped connect people to a collective heritage in a deeper and more personal way than just the traditional study of 'top down' history. He was also widely published in academic journals and sought to contribute to national and international conferences. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he was also, amongst many key roles, history editor of the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Chair of the *Social History Society*, Chair of the management committee for *Northern History*, and Vice-President of the *Society for the Study of Labour History*.

Malcolm's love of history and his intellectual curiosity were reflected in everything he did for the University and for his students and colleagues. He will be remembered here with enormous respect and affection.

Malcolm's funeral will be held on Friday 20 March 2020, on which day the flag on the Parkinson Building will be flown at half-mast in his memory.