

Institution: Swansea University
Unit of Assessment: 29 - English Language and Literature
a. Context

The English Department's research centres lead and promote impact activities. **CREW** (Centre for Research into Welsh writing in English), and the Creative and Media Writing group (**CMW**) engage with the creative industries, the heritage sector and with arts funders and policy makers. The Language Research Centre (**LRC**) pioneers pedagogical techniques, such as the virtual reality language learning network for children VILL@GE, which is used in schools in Wales, Hungary and Greece and won a European Language Label Award 2011. The interdisciplinary research centres founded by the English Department, Medieval and Early Modern (**MEMO**), and Gender (**GENCAS**), undertake projects mediating archival material to the general public, with English staff playing leading roles. The department has strong links with public arts bodies and policy makers: **Smith** is Chair of the Arts Council of Wales (since 2006), **Thomas** is Chair of the Welsh Books Council (since 2004), **Bohata** is adviser and panel member for both. **Dafydd** is the Hay Festival International Fellow for 2013-14; **Gower** held this post in 2011, he also toured for the British Council in that year.

The principal **beneficiaries** of the Department's research include the Welsh Government, the Welsh Books Council, Arts Council of Wales, Literature Wales; local councils (for instance Swansea and Chester Councils); institutions such as the National Library of Wales, the V&A, the National Waterfront Museum, Huntington Library, California; the creative industries (publishers, arts and theatre venues, and the print and broadcast media); students in schools and higher education, and the general public. The main **forms of impact** are: driving cultural heritage policy, providing new content for the creative industries, deepening understanding of literary and cultural works (through collaboration with museums and libraries as well as through publishing, public engagement events and the media), and influencing creative and pedagogical practices. We undertake a broad range of public engagement activities which influence public discourse – lectures, exhibitions, literary tours, websites, print and broadcast media, and educational materials.

b. Approach to impact

During 2008-13 the Department focused on designing research plans with impact as a key component from the outset. Clarke's two AHRC projects on medieval mapping, Bohata's AHRC and Wellcome Trust projects, and C. Franklin's AHRC Elizabeth Montagu edition epitomize this approach. These projects brought increasing benefits, as one public engagement activity stimulated others, leading to new partnerships (see case study 2). The Department also participated in a national dialogue on maximising impact (e.g. via the Southampton Knowledge Transfer Conference in July 2013).

The English Department has always had strong links with creative and heritage industries, the media and the local community. Since 2008, staff have formalized these networks (e.g. a major Welsh publisher, Parthian, now has office space at the University, furthering collaboration with **CREW** and **CMW**). Talks by publishers, dramatists, and programme-makers form an essential element in postgraduate programmes, while Swansea staff regularly provide interviews and new research for programmes and publications, benefiting the broadcast media and general public. For example, research by **CREW** directly generated BBC Radio 3 and S4C documentaries on R S Thomas, Amy Dillwyn, Walt Whitman, and Vernon Watkins. **Lord**'s research underpinned the TV series *Rolf Harris on Welsh Art* (Mentorn for BBC1 Wales, 2011), whose excellent viewing figures (6th in the top ten ratings, average 220,000) led to a second series being commissioned. **Penhallurick** filmed a feature on dialects with Alistair McGowan for *The One Show* on primetime BBC1. **Britton** had eight national radio dramas broadcast from 2008-13 including a series of original political response plays for Radio 4's Afternoon Drama, which attracts daily audiences of one million.

The heritage sector has also benefited from Swansea's archival research. Museum collaborations arising from such work saw **Penhallurick**'s Archive of Welsh English included in the British Library's *Evolving English: One Language, Many Voices* exhibition and the *Voices of the UK*

Impact template (REF3a)

project (2009-13), while the AHRC-funded *Elizabeth Montagu's Correspondence* project worked with the V&A on *Writing Materials: Women of Letters from Enlightenment to Modernity* (Nov 2012). CREW members curated a major exhibition on Welsh art and patronage at the National Library of Wales and the Glynn Vivian Gallery (2008-09), staged an exhibition and workshops on Paul Robeson (2010-11) with the National Eisteddfod, and presented an AHRC-funded *Dillwyn Day: Science, Culture and Politics* with the South Wales Miners' Library, the National Waterfront Museum, and Swansea Museum. These successful public events cemented our relationships with community groups and forged new institutional partnerships as well as reaching many members of the public.

Public engagement and outreach work by **CMW** included two youth community projects by Britton, *Oedipus/Antigone* (published by Bloomsbury in *Six Plays for Young Performers*), and involvement in the RSC's 2012 outreach programme *To Live, To Love, To Be*, about Shakespeare's life. Impact was further registered by reviews in the national broadsheet press, including a review by A. L. Kennedy in *The Guardian* of **Davies's** novel *The Eyrie*, Helen Dunmore's review of Davies's *Awakening*, and a four-star *Guardian* review of Britton's adaptation of *Measure for Measure*.

Building Impact Infrastructure: Bohata was appointed **impact co-ordinator** for the Department, with responsibility for a) investigating methods of capturing evidence of impact for the process of review, b) providing advice to mentors of early career researchers and to research centres on the impact potential of research plans, and c) creating an infrastructure for developing and supporting impact in the future. The Department and the College of Arts and Humanities formalized its support for staff serving on public arts bodies by recognizing the time dedicated to these posts. Internal funding was provided for impact activities by **CREW** (£1000 p.a. from 2010), enabling the sponsorship of literary tourism events, the provision of publishing subventions for publications for a general audience, and responses to archives and data donated by the public (e.g. creation of online materials about the Dillwyn family). The Research Institute of Arts and Humanities (**RIAH**) provides impact funding on a competitive basis: for example, **MEMO** was granted funding to run a children's medieval event at the Central Library in Swansea in 2011 in conjunction with the children's librarian. Furthermore, the University's award-winning *Performance Enabling Scheme* and *Career Pathways* model for staff promotion specifically supports and rewards innovation and engagement / impact activity.

c. Strategy and plans

The College of Arts and Humanities will appoint an **Impact Officer** to oversee and support strategic planning, including a series of workshops on pathways to impact with external presenters (2014-15). It will also establish an inter-disciplinary peer-review/mentoring scheme for impact. RIAH funding for the scoping and development of impact activities and collaborations will be extended, and RIAH will continue to help staff access other funds (e.g. the pan-Wales Strategic Insight Placement scheme). Impact activities are now formally recognised and measured in staff workloads, while administrative support and sabbaticals to plan or undertake impact activities are available through RIAH. The University holds an EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account and will be using a portion of this funding to instigate an institution-wide impact award scheme in 2014, to recognise and celebrate research impact. The scheme will be open to all researchers at the University, and will be judged by a panel including external research users.

Plans for 2014 and beyond: The Department will further develop its links with creative industries, the heritage sector, community groups, schools, national and international cultural bodies and the media. The aim is for researchers to develop long-term, two-way engagement with non-academic user groups, thus maximising the potential for ongoing research impact. Wherever possible conferences and events organised by the Department will continue to include a knowledge exchange/public engagement dimension (e.g. writing workshops for adults and children during the 2014 Dylan Thomas centenary conference). Two Access to Masters (ESF Convergence funding) placements will be established, whereby **CREW** and **CMW** students will undertake editorial and market research projects with independent publishers (Parthian and Seren Books). These MA projects will be backed up by a HEFCW-funded Strategic Impact Placement (2014) to release staff to work with Seren Books. An Arts and Business conference, in collaboration with Singapore Management University in 2015 (building on one held in Singapore in 2012), will develop

Impact template (REF3a)

partnerships with the creative industries in Wales and Singapore. CMW is also working with Swansea University's College of Medicine in a trial of reflective writing practices for trainee doctors (joint presentation at the 17th International Reflective Practice Conference, September 10th 2013).

Partnerships with community groups will be extended. The Dillwyn project (supported by the AHRC in 2012) will work with new partners, including the Penllergare Restoration project (to renovate a Victorian botanical garden, preserve the Dillwyn family archives and create a visitor centre, with a £2m Heritage Lottery grant). Heritage Lottery Funding will also bring **Penhallurick's** research on Gower dialect to the public as part of a £1.3m grant to Gower Landscape Partnership. **CREW** will facilitate a programme of community and public events at the National Waterfront Museum in 2014, and, in partnership with this museum and the National Library of Wales, will in 2015-16 co-curate a touring exhibition, *Disability and Industrial Society*, part of a Wellcome Trust-funded project.

CREW's expertise in the work of Dylan Thomas has been identified as having significant impact potential in his centenary year, 2014. **CREW** is working on Dylan Thomas projects with Swansea City Council, Swansea's MPs and AMs, Literature Wales, and other bodies. **Goodby's** research in this area, and that of other staff, will form the basis of public lectures, performances, writing workshops, several literary tours, a film and other media collaborations, and a major book launch of Thomas's *Complete Poems*. The English department will build on the profile of Dylan Thomas activities to make a significant contribution to the literature strand of the next phase of the European City of Culture Bid 2017, for which Swansea has been short-listed. The department is also involved in the preparations for Swansea University's centenary year (2020).

External creative collaborations based on staff research will come to fruition, including Theatre Na n'Og's work on an original piece of multi-media theatre arising from **Bohata's** research on sexuality and ethnicity (**CREW**), while **McAvoy's** research on anchorites (**GENCAS/MEMO**) has prompted collaboration with playwright Susan Schilperoot on a dramatic monologue. **CMW** projects will add to public knowledge through commissioned works, including **Donahaye's** biography of the Welsh Jewish writer Lily Tobias, and plays on historical events, including the Welsh diaspora and the Middle East (via an interdisciplinary project with Texas A&M University, linked to the 900th anniversary of the mission by St Francis of Assisi to negotiate with the Muslim world).

d. Relationship to case studies

Our three very different studies emerge from the work of three of the research centres described above: Welsh writing in English, MEMO, and Creative Writing. **CREW** has been proactively using its research to influence cultural policy, funding and education in Wales for more than 20 years, and the *Library of Wales* case study, although only describing impact since 2008, represents a project whose benefits began to be felt well before then. This study exemplifies the well-established networks and partnerships with government, the creative industries, arts and education bodies, which enable CREW research to make a direct impact on Welsh cultural life.

Clarke's AHRC-funded Mapping Medieval Chester project emerged from the interdisciplinary research centre **MEMO**. Conceived and led by Literature staff, it was designed with the new impact agenda in mind. Clearly identified pathways to impact were embedded from the start and as new partnerships were forged, our new policy of supporting impact activities allowed Clarke a year's sabbatical leave (2009-10) to develop a second phase of public engagement via an AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship (2012), resulting in major new impact for the existing research.

The Creative Writing Group's longstanding focus on community engagement is exemplified by the **CMW** case study, *Father Knew Lloyd George*. The study shows how Britton demonstrated that experimental theatre could successfully attract and engage with new audiences, not only through the use of innovative techniques, but by way of business models which involved potential audiences in the development of the project from the beginning. Again, the impact has fed back into new possibilities, as the project led to a substantial research and development grant from the Arts Council of Wales for further creative work along similar lines.