

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Leicester</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 17: Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology</p>
<p>Title of case study: Coin Hoards and Helmets: Iron Age treasure boosts tourism, underpins museum expansion and inspires new sense of community pride.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p>
<p>A research project, embedded in the local community, unearthed multiple Iron Age treasures that have rewritten our understanding of the Iron Age to Roman transition in Britain. The discoveries directly inspired the South East Leicestershire Treasure project (SELT), which raised £934k funding (including 651K from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)) for a major programme encompassing museum redevelopment, travelling exhibitions and a suite of learning resources. SELT initiatives have been enjoyed by over 270,000 members of the public, who through it have gained fascinating insights into our distant past. The find has also inspired a huge sense of community pride in a Leicestershire village and underlined the value of university involvement in local archaeology. The project was another important factor in the recent award of a Queen's Anniversary Prize.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p>
<p><i>Timeline: Discovery: 2000; fieldwork & analysis: 2001–2010; monograph 2011; reviews 2012–</i></p> <p>The discovery by the voluntary Hallaton Fieldwork Group (HFWG) of an open-air hilltop shrine with multiple Iron Age coin hoards sparked a major collaborative research project between the UoA and the local community comprising survey, excavation and laboratory work. The project provides a case study of best-practice investigation techniques for hoard sites and for the successful integration of professional bodies and local communities in research projects.</p> <p>Demarcated by a polygonal ditch, its entrance guarded by ritually bound dogs, the shrine was in use around the time of the Roman invasion of Britain in the mid 1st century AD. The finds included 350 Roman coins, >5,000 Iron Age coins (augmenting the regional corpus by 150%) and a Roman cavalry helmet and fragments of others with silver decoration of high artistic quality. The nature of the deposits suggests communal rituals orchestrated by local elites, with broader social participation through feasting on sacrificed pigs (evidenced by a mass of bones by the entrance). The first ritual site of this type in Europe to be comprehensively investigated, Hallaton is of international significance.</p> <p>The primary significance of the research is threefold: (1) in providing the most detailed insight yet into the nature of ephemeral Iron Age open-air ritual sites, as well as a plausible alternative interpretation of many other sites with multiple hoards, long interpreted as deposits buried for safe-keeping; (2) in overturning the existing view of the Iron Age inhabitants of the region as a unified tribe - analysis of the coins shows that they were produced by multiple groups, each issuing its own coinage; and (3) by challenging the existing narrative for the Iron Age to Roman transition which had assumed that before AD 43, Roman political networks extended only as far as south-east England. However, multiple Roman helmets of the quality found at Hallaton are difficult to explain other than as diplomatic gifts. Negotiations with the imperial authorities before or during the conquest would help explain the choice of the nearby settlement at Ratae (Leicester) as the capital of the self-governing <i>civitas</i> of the Corieltavi within the imperial province. The Institute for Archaeologists declared Hallaton a key archaeological project of the early 21st century (E1 – E numbers relate to evidence listed in section 5), a view endorsed by reviews of the monograph in leading journals (Publication 1 in Section 3).</p> <p>HFWG's membership of the County's community archaeology scheme resulted in rapid reporting of their major discovery, and the very early involvement of the UoA served to provide the field expertise and specialist equipment needed to recover the hoards, and the knowledge and skills to fully realise the historical significance of the discoveries. All this was achieved through involving English Heritage (EH) which facilitated geophysical survey of the environs and rescue excavation of the site, with close involvement of HFWG members throughout. Many of the finds, especially the</p>

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metal hoards, were lifted in earth blocks for laboratory excavation and conservation at the British Museum (BM). The Hallaton project offers a model for contextual analysis of hoard sites, leading to the UoA/British Museum AHRC Roman coin hoards project. Equally importantly, it provided the then relatively new Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) with a template for integrating community groups into statutory, professional and academic networks dealing with other treasure finds.

From the outset, a key aim was full participation of the local community. HFWG and Harborough Museum continue to work with specialists from the UoA, the British Museum (BM) and Goldsmiths Company. Clay (Director University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) 1995–) managed the project, Score (ULAS 1999–) directed the fieldwork, Morgan (Conservator 1974–2005) oversaw lifting of the coins, and Taylor (Lecturer 1999–) led the landscape study and edited the final report. Haselgrove (Professor 2005–) was lead academic for the publication, assisting Score in researching and editing the text, with major contributions coming from James (Professor, 2000–) for the helmet; Cooper (ULAS 1996–), the other material culture; Browning (ULAS 1996–) and Thomas (Senior Lecturer 2003–), the faunal assemblage; Farley (PhD 2012), coin metallurgy; Hamilton (PhD 2011), scientific dating.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Awards:

Grants for the fieldwork and research for the publication have been received from:

Dr Patrick Clay. 'Hallaton 3099'. English Heritage (31/8/2001–10/2/2012) £92,067.40

Dr Patrick Clay. 'The Hallaton Hoard'. The Society of Antiquaries (16/4/2007) £15,000

Dr Jeremy Taylor 'The Landscape Context of the East Leicestershire Hoards'. The Roman Research Trust (30/6/2008-1/9/2008) £1,706

Prof Colin Haselgrove. 'An analysis of British Iron Age coins from the Hallaton hoard' ISIS Facility STFC, Experiment - RB1010378 (21/12/2009) £23,340 (in kind)

Publication:

- Score, V. (ed.), 2011. *Hoards, Hounds And Helmets. A Conquest-Period Ritual Site at Hallaton, Leicestershire*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph No. 21, with contributions from Browning; Cooper; Farley; Hamilton; Haselgrove; James and Taylor.

Reviews include *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* ('one of the most exciting late Iron Age and Romano-British finds of recent years') and *Britannia* ('This well-illustrated and comprehensive report will deservedly place Hallaton as fundamental to discussions of the late Iron Age to Roman transition').

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The project has shown how local communities can work together with professional archaeologists, universities, the public sector and national bodies to produce and promote new understandings of the past. It demonstrates that such public collaboration can have far-reaching impacts, on the local population and beyond. Recognition of the value of the project is reflected in the **£933,872** awarded to SELT as a consequence (HLF £650,600; The Art Fund £100,000; Leicestershire County Council (LCC) £90,200; Museum & Galleries Improvements Fund £35,000; Museums Libraries Archives Council/V&A Purchase Grant Fund £35,000; Renaissance East Midlands £15,000; The Headley Trust £5,000; Friends of Leicester and Leicestershire Museums £1,000, Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group/HFWG £2,072). This funded purchase and conservation of the finds, development of displays at Harborough and Hallaton Museums, creation of two touring exhibitions and web resources, and the organising of workshops for schools and community groups plus open public events (**E2**).

REACH:

The research has had local and regional impact through:

- enhancing public understanding of the cultural value of Heritage and the Historic Environment, through:
 - motivation and training of HFWG from 'interest group' to near-professional skill levels, running their own annual survey and fieldwork programme, and offering expertise e.g. in

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geophysics to other groups **(E3)**.

- HFWG's example and support has encouraged foundation or revitalising of other local fieldwork groups now active in the region (e.g. Kibworth, the Welland Valley and Melton Mowbray) **(E3)**.
- economic benefits accruing to the local community through visitors to Hallaton Museum – **2,649** between 3/5/2009-30/9/2011 **(E4)**
- economic benefits to the regional community through visits to Harborough Museum – **56,749** (to Sept 2012, the date of the last available LCC census)
- underpinning successful campaigns in 2011 to preserve threatened regional museums **(E5)**

At national scale:

- Involvement of the BM and extensive media coverage has served to enhance the value of UK Heritage.
- The project has helped to shape the way that major UK hoard sites are treated, with large-scale investigation of the kind undertaken at Hallaton now becoming standard, e.g. for the Staffordshire hoard.
- Following investigations of the largest-ever hoard of late Roman coins found in the UK at Frome (Somerset), which suggested this might be a ritual deposit, the BM approached the UoA as their preferred partner in a successful bid to the AHRC for funding to investigate why and where third-century AD Roman coin hoards were buried in Britain (AHRC Grant Ref: AH/K000438/1, **£645,600** awarded 06/02/2013)
- HFWG members contributed evidence to the English Heritage survey on illicit metal-detecting (2009) currently informing national conservation policies **(E6)**.
- Alongside other projects in the current cycle our work at Hallaton contributed to the award of a Queen's Anniversary Prize, that explicitly recognised the public impact generated **(E7)**.

SIGNIFICANCE:

A key contribution has been publicising the benefits of engaging local communities in the kind of internationally important project that is normally the preserve of professional and academic bodies. It has revitalised the pride and interest of the local and regional community in their heritage and its preservation and protection, resulting in a project exhibition in Hallaton Museum in 2009, funded by the HLF (who highlighted the impressive nature of community involvement). Designed by the local community itself, the display won 'Best Exhibition' and also 'Best Museum' at the Heritage Awards for Leicestershire and Rutland (2009) **(E7)**. The museum attracts visitors to the village from some distance who often stay to sample local amenities and look round the area, bringing vital economic benefits into the locality.

The BM combined forces with LCC to ensure that the internationally important finds would stay in the region rather than be taken to London. A major HLF grant (noted above) was secured to upgrade the Harborough Museum making the project its central exhibition. In the first six months after the opening of the updated Museum in 2009 visitor numbers rose by 100% with 10,000 people visiting the exhibition **(E8)**. Frequent events based around the project are held at the site, run by UoA staff and HFWG. The presence of the treasure exhibition and the increased visitor figures have been instrumental in saving the Museum from threatened closure through a campaign and petition (January 2011 - 2,354 signatures) supported by TV historian Michael Wood **(E5)**. Other local groups have also become involved, the 'Market Harborough Movie Makers' won a 4* (Silver) award at the 2010 British International Amateur Film Festival with their documentary 'The Hallaton Treasure', now a permanent part of the Harborough Museum displays **(E9)**.

During the refurbishment of Harborough Museum as an integrated library, adult learning facility and permanent home for the Hallaton treasure (23/3–3/11/13), the material was temporarily displayed at LCC's flagship Snibston Discovery Museum (13,918 visitors 23/3-31/7). Here it was central to a major exhibition, 'Treasure! Shedding Light on Leicestershire's Past', showcasing the project to new audiences: Snibston has over 100K visitors annually, from Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and beyond. Hallaton also featured in LCC's contribution to the national Festival of British Archaeology (13 - 28 July, 2013).

Although to deter clandestine looting the project was initially kept quiet, since the press release in

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2003 events and displays have been undertaken to involve the wider community and encourage other local historical and archaeological groups. This includes several displays in the village for the community with talks by experts; 100+ talks by the UoA; 40+ talks by the HFWG; 'hands on' talks to local schools; displays for National Archaeology Week; involvement in conferences including the annual public Hallaton Treasure conference. A total of **270,680** people have attended South-East Leicestershire Treasure (SELT) projects from Sept 2009 up to the end of the programme in Sept 2012 (Hallaton Museum until April 2011): Museum events (5,175 visitors) Roadshow events/conferences (7,262); After School groups (170); Off-site education (704); 'Consumed?' (touring exhibition for Community Archaeology 67,062); On-site talks/tours (787); Off-site talks/tours (1,022); Researchers and enquiries (27); Website views of slideshow (22,363); Travelling exhibition (101,064); Goldsmith's Hall (4,553); General Visitors to Harborough Museum (56,749); Hallaton Museum (2,649); Training Courses (197). The project also contributed to the tourist economy, reflected in figures for Harborough Museum calculated using the nationally recognised Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM). From £0.26m in 2009 the economic impact of tourist visitors had risen to £0.75m by 2012, with the combined total for 2011-12 reaching £1.34m (**E4**).

The project has had a huge impact on the members of the HFWG. The training and encouragement given by the UoA has enabled them to expand knowledge of their local heritage and provide them with the skills and expert advice to continue their research and provide an example for other interested parties (**E3**). They in turn have nurtured and mentored other local groups in undertaking similar fieldwork (e.g. other local communities are now researching the archaeology of the middle Welland Valley, Leicestershire and are participating in a new collaborative project with the UoA on the archaeological landscapes south of Melton Mowbray). The HFWG have also been active outside the region, initiating an expert-community collaboration that has led to analysis and exhibition of a silver bowl from the site by the Goldsmith's Company London between 9/5/2011-15/7/2011 that attracted **4,553** visitors (**E4 & E10**).

Looking beyond the core region, the HLF grant has enabled the project to develop 'Consumed?' a travelling community exhibition for which UoA staff provided the text. 'Consumed?' can be borrowed for no charge by community groups/libraries and in 2010 appeared at the following libraries: Loughborough (3/2-5/3); Market Harborough (5/3-7/4); Melton Mowbray (7/4-5/5); Oadby (5/5-9/6); Wigston (9/6-7/7); Blaby (7/7-9/8). By the end of Aug 2012 'Consumed?' had been viewed by **67,062** visitors. Finds from Hallaton formed part of the BM's 'Buried Treasure: Finding our Past' exhibit (**37,000** visitors), which went on a national tour (4 venues, **180,000** visitors). Part of the Harborough Museums display includes a travelling exhibition, featuring many of the individuals involved, which embarked upon a 5-year tour beginning in Leicestershire before going national. When the SELT programme ended this had attracted **101,064** visitors at 13 venues including Ashby (544 children /1,088 adults, Nottingham (2,831/5,661), Kettering (1,120/2,240) & Lincoln (3,525/8,613) (**E4**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- E1.** The Archaeologist (Vol. 80 Summer 2011).
- E2.** Copies of relevant County Council Minutes; Treasure Project newsletters; Keeper Reports.
- E3.** Testimonial letter from the HFWG.
- E4.** Copies of LCC Yearly visitor data, relevant STEAM and SELT statistics and HLF data.
- E5.** <http://www.harboroughmail.co.uk/lifestyle/events-exhibitions/strong-show-of-support-for-museum-campaigners-1-2353870>
- E6.** <http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/nighthawking-survey/>
- E7.** http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/museums/community_museums/heritageawards/heritageawards2009.htm & <http://www.royalanniversarytrust.org.uk/news/winners-announced-2013>
- E8.** <http://leicestershiremuseums.wordpress.com/2010/03/02/harborough-museum-visitor-numbers-rocket-by-100/>
- E9.** <http://www.theiac.org.uk/film/makingof/film-making4/hallaton-treasure.html>
- E10.** <http://leicestershiremuseums.wordpress.com/2011/05/09/2000-year-old-hallaton-silver-bowl-inspires-london-exhibition/>