

<b>Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D31 Classics</b>
<b>Title of case study: Communicating Wroxeter's significance</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Academic research undertaken on the site of Wroxeter Roman City, Shropshire, aimed at interpreting the site 'building-by-building', revolutionised current understanding of the site and its chronology. This research has benefitted the management of the site, English Heritage policy, education and public discourse, and economic prosperity within the region. The research resulted in the commissioning of new outputs aimed at improving the understanding and management of the monument, and at increasing visitor use and the communication of the significances of the site to the public. Deliverables included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a management plan</li> <li>• a web-based research tool for English Heritage</li> <li>• a new guidebook for the site</li> <li>• interpretive materials for the museum galleries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The main body of research underpinning the impact was carried out between December 2008 and November 2012 by Dr Roger White, Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, which built on earlier research at the University of Birmingham (UoB) that took place between 1994 and 1997. The principal focus of this research was on the completion of a building-by-building description and interpretation of the Roman city of Wroxeter (the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Roman settlement in Britain), based on geophysical data and aerial photographs of the site. This was the first project of its type ever attempted for Roman Britain, and one that has revolutionised the understanding of the city's chronology, development and demise.</p> <p>The research outlined above represents a considerable legacy of work at the Roman city of Wroxeter by UoB. White's research there commenced in 1976, just two years after the site came under the care of the State. From 1987, he was engaged to write the final report for a major state-funded excavation on the baths basilica at Wroxeter and, from 1994, he was employed by the UoB as a Leverhulme Research Fellow on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project (WHP). The WHP was a landscape scale remote sensing project that ran from 1994 until 1997 and was led by academics from UoB in collaboration with teams from Britain, France, Germany, the USA and Japan, in addition to private companies, governmental institutions and amateur groups. At the time, the survey was amongst the largest and most ambitious ever attempted, covering an area of 78 hectares. In addition to generating the first comprehensive and extensive plans of the buried landscape, the project had outputs including novel web-based virtual reality reconstructions funded by British Telecom. In 1997, the WHP won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for 'Outstanding archaeological work and results made plain and of value to the wider public.'</p> <p>The first monograph resulting from the WHP (see output R1 below) focused on the wider landscape around the Roman city of Wroxeter and received very significant international recognition. Following this, White's research between 2008 and 2012 focused on the interpretation of the site following a building-by-building analysis of all data sources, revolutionising understanding of the site, and resulting in a monograph focusing on the description and interpretation of the whole of the city (R2). This was also the subject of White's contribution to the World Archaeology Congress in Jordan in January 2013. Since 1997, White has written, or had significant input into, six monographs on the site, along with many research papers. His research at Wroxeter and across western Britain in the later Roman Empire also resulted in a sole-authored book on the Roman province of Britannia Prima (R3). This volume was awarded the honour of Book of the Year in 2009 by the readers of Current Archaeology Magazine, the leading archaeology magazine in the UK, which caters to both professional archaeologists and the interested general public.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

White's unparalleled research into the interpretation of the Roman city led to him being commissioned by English Heritage in 2009 to produce three key documents relating to the current management and public interpretation of the site: the management plan, a web-based research tool for the public and for fellow academics and an updated guidebook. The findings of this research have also been used directly to inform the writing of the latest publications on the site and the new interpretation to be used in the new galleries of the Shropshire Museum, ensuring that the research conclusions will have a very measurable impact on the public visiting the site or the museum well into the future.

The research at Wroxeter has also led to the exploration of the impact of the excavation of the site in terms of the academic discipline (R4) and White also delivered a paper on this theme at the European Archaeological Association conference at Pilzen, Czech Republic in September 2013.

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

- R1) Gaffney, V.L., R.H. White and H. Goodchild 2007. *Wroxeter, the Cornovii, and the urban process. Final report on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project 1994-1997: researching the Hinterland*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series **[Available on request]**
- R2) White, R.H., C. Gaffney and V.L. Gaffney with A. Baker 2013 *Wroxeter, the Cornovii and the Urban Process. Final Report on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project 1994-1997. Volume 2: Characterizing the City*. Oxford: Archaeopress **[listed in REF2]**
- R3) White, R.H. 2007 *Britannia Prima. Britain's Last Roman Province*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing **[entered in RAE 2008] [Available on request]**
- R4) Everill, P. and R. White 2011 'Philip Barker's Wroxeter' in John Schofield (ed.) *Great Excavations. Shaping the archaeological profession*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 167-180 **[Available on request]**
- R5) White, R. and P. Barker 1998. *Wroxeter: life and death of a Roman city*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing **[Available on request]**
- R6) Ellis, P. and R. White (ed.) 2006. *Wroxeter archaeology: excavations and research on the defences and in the town, 1968-1992*. English Heritage **[Available on request]**.

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

White's research on the Roman city of Wroxeter and the region has had significant impact on: the running and management of the site; English Heritage policy; education and public discourse; and on economic prosperity within the region.

White's research directly influenced the running and management of the site by English Heritage. Through his research, White has become universally regarded as the leading authority on the Roman city of Wroxeter and the region, and so he was commissioned by English Heritage to formulate the site's Management Plan between December 2008 and June 2010. The Management Plan continues to **provide a guiding framework for engagement with the site** at all levels and this has been implemented through the creation of a Conservation Management Plan [see source 1 below] which is scheduled to be revised every five years. The Management Plan followed the newly introduced English Heritage document *Conservation Principles. Policy and Guidance*, using a consultation process involving negotiation with all stakeholders ranging from the local community, landowners, businesses and councillors, through to Natural England, the Environment Agency and the international academic community (through a one-day conference held at the Society of Antiquaries in London, February 2009). This process, along with the implementation of the Management Plan through the Conservation Management Plan [1], **is now being implemented using the same model** across the other 400+ properties owned by English Heritage.

The research also **informed Education and Public Discourse**, both by enhancing the running of the site (through the Management Plan) and through the generation of outputs intended for public consumption. Following the success of the research outlined above, English Heritage commissioned two outputs; an online, digital resource and a guidebook [2]. The first of these was

## Impact case study (REF3b)

commissioned in August 2010 and led to the creation *de novo* of a research resource hosted by English Heritage via their website, providing an outline of the history, significance and research related to the site, in addition to a comprehensive list of sources available to members of the public. The resource went online in April 2011 as part of English Heritage's *Portico* portal [3] which is considered as the first port of call for anyone researching their sites (approximately 400 in total). The second output, commissioned in December 2009, was a popular 10,000 word guidebook based on the results of the research outlined above. This book went on sale in August 2012, with nearly 1000 copies sold up until March 2013 [4]. The new understanding of the chronology of the Roman city of Wroxeter developed during the research outlined above also **directly informed the creation of reconstructions of the site** commissioned by Shropshire Museums Service which provide illustrations in the new Roman galleries in the Shrewsbury Museum (opening 2013). Together these provide up-to-date research materials for all in accessible formats presenting the results of the research within the context of a narrative of Roman Britain and the Empire. Through his research, White has advised on the exhibition in Shrewsbury Museum that combines a digital resource, a guidebook and museum content, the research is having a significant impact on education and public understanding of the site and region. "The support of the leading academic in the archaeology and interpretation of Viroconium has **ensured that the gallery will be of both national and international significance and an integral contribution to our cultural heritage**" [5].

In addition to public engagement, the research outlined above has had an impact on local **economic prosperity through increased public awareness and visitors to the site**. White's research resulted in him being consulted on and assisting in the production of Channel 4 television's 'Rome Wasn't Built in a Day' which focused on the construction of a Roman villa at Wroxeter using traditional techniques. White's research **directly informed the design of the villa** and he was consulted on research about the site and on Roman building technologies. This participation in the filming has fed directly into the continuing research on the site, aiding understanding of the footprint of Roman buildings there, and **directly informing the presentation of the site to the public** both onsite and through the guidebook where the implications of the project are discussed. The programme was watched by 1.377m viewers [6] and resulted in a 177% increase in visitors to the site during 2011 [7]. This increase in tourism will have had an economic impact locally.

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

- [1] Conservation Plan for the site (2010); now available electronically through ADS: [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/wroxcons\\_eh\\_2012/](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/wroxcons_eh_2012/)  
**ADS Collection: 1166 doi:10.5284/1017083**
- [2] White, R. 1999. *Wroxeter Roman city*. English Heritage guidebooks (available on request)
- [3] Portico site: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/wroxeter-roman-city/history-and-research/>
- [4] Numbers of Wroxeter Roman City 'Red guidebooks' sold since publication in August 2012 – 16 March 2013: 982 (note that Wroxeter site museum, where the guidebook is principally sold, was only open for weekends during the period end October – beginning March). (Figures supplied by English Heritage staff at Wroxeter.)
- [5] Factual statement provided by Heritage Project Manager and Interpretation Officer, Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, detailing the contribution of White's work for the exhibition.
- [6] 1.377 million viewers for 'Rome wasn't built in a day': <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/feb/11/tv-ratings-mad-dogs>
- [7] Wroxeter visitor numbers for 2011: a 177% increase in visitor figures, to 57,278, for 2011 <http://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=423>
- [8] Contact details provided for Property Curator, English Heritage.
- [9] Contact details provided for Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Shropshire, English Heritage.