

<p>Institution: University of Hertfordshire</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: Panel D (29): English Language and Literature</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>The unit's research strategy is designed to foster a research culture that is outward-facing and committed to engagement between researchers and the wider community and discipline base. The impacts of the unit's research include: literary heritage; contributing to developments and discussions in teaching literature and creative writing; delivery of theatre and film-based works to support GCSE and A Level curricula; influencing debate on Shakespeare and theatre-based practice in the UK and beyond; contributions to conservation through museum-based panels and committees; and engagement with arts groups. The main non-academic users and beneficiaries of the unit's research include teachers, subject enthusiasts, theatregoers, creative writing practitioners, charities, and literary and historical groups.</p> <p>The wider range of research activity in the unit also generates impact. Schelleter's work on bilingualism has shaped teaching methods in schools, and Peacock's film projects have prompted audiences to consider their sporting heritage. The unit's commitment to impact has also been the driver behind the support for George's Open Graves, Open Minds: Vampires and the Undead in Modern Culture project and Wheeler's work with Hertfordshire County Archives; in the latter case, the work has led to the setting up of the Literary Hertfordshire website, which is being developed with the university's interdisciplinary Heritage Hub. In each instance, this work is routinely disseminated to the wider community.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The unit's approach to impact has been to go beyond the parameters of 'academic'-based English studies to engage with wider disciplinary understandings and interests (Arab Shakespeare, vampire cultures, literary heritage) in a local and global context. In order to do this the unit has taken several distinct approaches:</p> <p>Establish spaces for genuine exchange and dialogue between researchers and audience. Projects on popular fiction, such as Open Graves Open Minds (George), have given us good reach to a younger and less traditional audience, enabling them better to see the relevance of academic work. With the first Open Graves Open Minds conference (April 2010) the organisers were able to use various media to create interest round the project, which gathered a huge amount of media coverage and debate from the start (e.g., 'UK Bringing Vampires Back Home', <i>Reuters</i>, 6 April 2010; 'Bloody Hell: Brits Complain Yanks are Stealing their Vampires', <i>Toronto Life</i>, 7 May 2010). The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> made a film of the two-day event, Vampires Make it into Academia. This segment of the project attracted over 200 delegates, 25% of whom were fans of the series <i>True Blood</i> and <i>Twilight</i>, and who came over from the US. The aim was to generate interest in George's edited collection <i>Open Graves, Open Minds: Representations of Vampires and the Undead from the Enlightenment to the Present</i>. Because much of the overseas media coverage focused – inaccurately – on the idea that the project's aim was to rescue vampire studies from the Americanisation of the field, or that it was offering a degree in vampirism, there was inevitably some 'writing back' by the unit (e.g., George, 'Let's Give Vampires their Teeth Back' <i>The Sun</i>, Saturday 28 April 2012, 40–1); and George, <i>The Vampire Goes to College: Essays on teaching with the Undead</i> (McFarland 2013). What emerges from this project are the connections the unit has been able to form with the project's different audiences – academics, students, enthusiasts, writers, aficionados – whose responses have creatively impacted on subsequent outputs. The initial audiences have fed later work and informed the development of the project.</p> <p>This approach is also true of those areas of research with a performance element, including the World War I Theatre project. The unit's semi-staged productions of these rediscovered First World War plays have initially been 'work in progress' performances to test audience reactions. Our audience members are contributors who are asked open, interested and unsteering questions about the plays they have seen. People viewing the plays have commented, questioned and</p>
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written to us afterwards. They have also argued with one another in post-performance discussion groups about the 'message' of particular plays. Audience responses have played an integral part in how we select follow up plays or restage others. So, for example, with the drama *The Handmaidens of Death*, each staging says something different to the audience. At the first performance (June 2012), the audience of school students responded via questionnaire and post-performance discussion. A subsequent staging (November 2012) was a direct response to what the first audience said. This will continue as the eventual professional productions take shape. In this sense the audiences for these newly discovered plays have become a collection of peers with whom we are loosely collaborating.

Work with local heritage agencies. Staff are encouraged to be proactive in creating research contacts between individual scholars and external groups such as Bishop's Stortford Museum, Hertfordshire County Archives, and community project Herts at War. Once initial contact has been established, staff work to develop longer-term relationships. The Patterning Hitchin Lives project with Hitchin Museum in 2009 came about after developing an AHRC bid with them two years previously. The bid was unsuccessful but the relationship was maintained through student visits. A similar example came in 2010, when, in association with Mill Green Museum and as part of a successful Museums and Library Association grant (£10,000), **Peacock** developed the film *SportAction* as part of an exhibition on the theme of local sporting heroes, leading up to the 2012 Olympics. The project drew on collaborative links with local community organisations, including the Herts Sports Partnership, Welwyn Sports and Physical Activity Alliance, Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust, and Mill Green Museum. The objective was to create a film that celebrated past, present and future sporting achievement in the local communities of Hatfield and Welwyn, connecting with growing interest in light of the 2012 Olympic Games in London; and to encourage greater sporting activity amongst young people. To promote the latter, the film was shown in secondary schools across the region.

Follow-through on projects that address issues relating to education or pedagogy which have become pressing. For example, the EU-funded ELIAS project (2008–10) (www.elias.bilikita.org/) led at UH by **Schelleter** looked at children learning a second language through immersion at primary school level. The project's starting point was the aim of the European Union for citizens to be fluent in at least one additional language. As the UK partner, **Schelleter** collected data from children attending a bilingual nursery at the German school in London, and English monolingual children in Hertfordshire. The project's findings led to the provision of practical guidelines for teachers involved in bilingual education programmes, as well as educators planning to start up a bilingual nursery or school. The project's findings and materials have been accessed via Germany's platform for bilingual institutions (www.fmks.eu), via EVE (the EU's platform).

Support for impact. Support for impact is facilitated through the School of Humanities, which contributes administrative and financial support for event organisation, and also through competitive funding at university level. In 2010 **George** was awarded a university grant of £6,000 for the Open Graves Open Minds vampire project; **Wheeler** was awarded £5,800 for Literary Hertfordshire; and **Mauder** received £7,000 for World War I Theatre. The unit also works with UH Arts, a £500,000-funded university-sponsored organisation designed to share research in the arts within the community. Performances of the World War I plays have taken place in its theatre, the Weston Auditorium. The role of UH Arts as platform for dissemination is also evident in the numerous talks and film screenings hosted by the unit, all free to the general public, which allow it to publicise ongoing research. **Peacock's** talk on Jacques Demy's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (2011) emerged from his book on *Colour* (2011). Cavalcanti's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1947), screened by UH Arts to an audience of 90 as part of the Dickens Bicentenary, was an opportunity for **Mauder**, introducing the film, to present a snapshot of his work on adaptation. This event led to an invitation from an audience member to deliver a further talk to the Friends of Welwyn Museum.

Additional forms of institutional support includes the School of Humanities' Business Development Co-ordinator, who helps to develop external collaborations across the commercial, educational and charitable sectors, including assistance with bid-writing, costing and tendering. At university level a dedicated team provides support for Knowledge Transfer Partnership projects, and the Marketing

and Communications team help organise publicity and PR for public events. The university's media team actively seeks out opportunities to publicise and disseminate research. Conference Hertfordshire also provides assistance in organising and managing conferences.

c. Strategy and plans

The university requires the unit to formulate a research delivery plan for the period 2015–20, and an associated research impact plan will also be produced to identify further avenues for development of existing impact, together with areas of new impact from our research. This future plan will see the unit continuing to recognise the centrality of individual scholarly work for academic presses and journals while expanding hubs of collaborative activity that have public participation and benefit as part of their remit. With the university's Heritage Hub, the unit has been part of a successful bid to act as an AHRC Co-ordinating Centre for Community Research and Engagement to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War. Central here will be our work via the World War I Theatre project, and **Maunder** will work with the English Association as part of its WWI conference for teachers (April 2014). **Budge's** interest in the history of medicine will continue via work with local historians and a youth theatre group on *Shellshock in and out of the Asylum* (2013–14). **Wheeler** and **Hughes** will lead the Literary Hertfordshire project on local author Magdalen King-Hall, as a follow-up to a new edition of her 1943 bestseller *The Wicked Lady*, set in the county. **George** will work with St Albans Museum and with archaeologist Marcus Beresford on establishing a vampire trail around the city.

The unit will also develop further its strategy for use of the media, including social media, a precedent already set by the Open Graves, Open Minds project. The unit will continue to be heavily involved with UH Heritage Hub and the opportunities this offers for collaborative research within and outside the university. It is also envisaged that UH Arts will play a larger part in the unit's impact strategy. UH Arts already draws upon a large public who share in the cultural life of the university. The unit will build on the existing practice whereby the unit's staff organise and participate in UH Arts events.

d. Relationship to case studies

The selected case studies – on Arab Shakespeare and World War I Theatre – have encompassed many of the approaches detailed above. They emerged from 'traditional' scholarly research but it became apparent that, in common with the work of **Schelleter**, **Wagstaff** and **George**, they contained scope for genuine exchange and dialogue between researchers and various audiences and are examples of the unit's commitment to a wider, public context for its research. The former stems from **Holderness's** longstanding interest in the production and consumption of Shakespeare in the present, especially outside the academy, as represented by works such as *The Shakespeare Myth* (1988) and *Cultural Shakespeare* (2001), early studies of the Shakespeare industry. The case study draws on work of this kind, since it concerns contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare, political and social context, and wider engagement with community and society. The second case study on World War I Theatre emerges from **Maunder's** anthology *British Literature of World War I* (2011). It explores the ways in which plays from 1914–18 – 'missing links' in the study of wartime writing – have been used to change perceptions of the conflict amongst different constituencies ranging from GCSE students to pensioners. Forged in collaboration with professional actors and university students recruited to explore these lost plays, a range of performances and workshops have been used to help the public engage with new ways of understanding the Home Front during the war.

Arab Shakespeare provides a model for developing international links, whilst World War I Theatre has used university support networks (e.g. the Heritage Hub) and links with local schools to develop connections and collaborations en route to achieving demonstrable levels of public participation. As projects, they offer a framework for how impact might be extracted from future scholarly research by making use of a supportive institutional infrastructure. But the projects have also been committed to working collaboratively with non-academic partners – in the case of Arab Shakespeare, with a professional playwright and director; and World War I Theatre, with professional actors and directors, war charities, theatre companies and school students.