

Institution: Loughborough University

Unit of Assessment: D29 English Language and Literature

a. Context

The Unit encompasses within a single Department a diverse range of research into literature, performance, and linguistics. Our research has an impact with a reach both national and international, and our main non-academic research users are: the public; the creative industries; arts organizations; literature and theatre educators and practitioners. The impact can be categorised as: **(1) Cultural life** Our researchers have both interpreted and created literature and performance that enriches people's lives spiritually, economically and educationally, and several members of the Department are published creative writers and theatre practitioners. *Examples include:* national and international theatre and poetry performances and tours (Case Study *Man of the Heart*, Pinchbeck; Scott-Jeffs; Cooke); engagement with local and national arts organizations (e.g. Charnwood Arts (since 1990); Apples & Snakes (Featherstone)). **(2) Education** lies at the heart of many of our impact activities, and the work of all our research groups informs and influences the teaching of literature and drama beyond the HE sector, disseminating new understandings in both formal and informal contexts. *Examples include:* public talks, workshops and exhibitions on contemporary literature (Parasol Unit Art Gallery, London (Cooke); Keswick Museum and Art Gallery (Bolton)); outreach publication of books, articles and pamphlets aimed specifically at non-specialists (Case Study 3; Freeman); conferences designed with participation by the general public as a fundamental component of activities. Our contribution to **(3) Public discourse** arises from research into areas where literature and drama impinge most directly on major challenges faced by individuals and society. *Examples include:* a full-length BBC Radio 4 documentary based on research into theatre and ageing (Mangan); significant contributions to policy debates (Spraggs); **(4) Civil society:** our research into women's writing, theatre and ethics, and (post-)colonial literatures informs and influences opinions, illuminating and challenging cultural values and social assumptions, and helping people to understand their lives today through coming to know the past. *Examples include:* long-standing engagement and activism with Irish community groups (O'Byrne); public talks and events in e.g. Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre (Case Study 3), Shakespeare's Globe; (Fitzpatrick, Egan), Guildhall Library, London Metropolitan Archives (Spraggs); interviews broadcast on radio and television (Fitzpatrick, Hobby).

b. Approach to impact

The Unit has in some ways been helped in its approach to impact by the fact that many of us are at an early stage in our careers. We are all clear that research funded by the public purse should be fully available to the public, and are much helped in our pursuit of impact with real reach and significance through being part of a University that has a well established reputation for the generation of applied research. Crucially, impact, and what the University terms 'Enterprise', are at the heart of the University's 2006 Strategic Plan, *Towards 2016*. This articulated a commitment to 'academic engagement with business, public and voluntary organizations to create social, cultural and economic impact through knowledge exchange', and to generate 'Research that Matters'. This definition pre-dates the REF2014 definition of 'impact', but clearly aligns closely with that agenda. *Towards 2016* also established a new research-focused University Arts Centre, RADAR, with which we collaborate to ensure visibility and impact for arts-related research. Because of the University's definition of impact as an aspect of Enterprise, impact strategy is overseen by our Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise (PVC(E)); each of Loughborough's ten Schools has its own Associate Dean for Enterprise, reporting directly to PVC(E). Through these means, dedicated support is provided for a full range of interactions with the wider world in activities that include consultancy, Knowledge Transfer partnerships, and business development, and the Department has acquired funding for impact-creating activities through the University's 'Enterprise Projects Group', which accesses HEIF sources. The Department has benefitted from these structures in various ways; for instance, detailed guidance from the Enterprise Office resulted in our attracting more than £330,000 from the AHRC's Knowledge Transfer scheme for the *Shakespeare and London Theatres Project* in 2011; see also section 4 below. Even more fundamentally, though, we benefit from a culture where it is taken for granted that research can and should have impact. We are therefore actively supported by the University in maintaining and developing our relationships

Impact template (REF3a)

with external organizations such as Charnwood Arts, who are represented on the University's Arts Committee. The University's annual review cycle requires reports on the results of external cultural activities both individually and as a Department. Individual colleagues involved with external organizations report on their activities annually at their Performance and Development Review (PDR), and agree targets and strategies for growing these connections. For instance, Featherstone's joining of the Board for the national creative writing organization *Apples and Snakes* (an important factor in our capacity to build connections with Writing Industries partners) was agreed at PDR, and O'Byrne's Irish Studies networking activities are factored into her agreed workload. The repeated requests to individuals for collaboration and consultation from a range of organizations (see some examples under (a) above), demonstrate that our partners find our inputs both significant and enriching.

Within this institutional context, our approach has been wide-ranging, as is appropriate to the breadth of the Department's research activities. Connections that we have nurtured with creative writing organizations (e.g. *Writing East Midlands* and the *Literature Network*) are an important aspect of our contribution to **Cultural life**, and led in 2009 and 2011 to our hosting the Midlands Writing Industries conferences. These events brought hundreds of creative writers at various career stages on to campus to participate in workshops and performances, to network with agents and publishers, and to form connections with members of the Department whose research outputs include creative writing (Cooke, Featherstone, Scott-Jeffs, Watt).

The Department's **Educational** activities include the hosting of three significant Knowledge-Transfer conferences with mixed academic and research-user audiences. Our *Irish Studies Conference* (2009) engaged several dozen members of the general public by advertising the event through Irish Studies networks; the *Writings of Intimacy* conference (2010) brought in general audiences through incorporating into its activities open readings by two poets and one prose writer; and in 2011, *English and Welsh Diasporas* scheduled performances by folk-singers and writers Chris Wood, *Telling the Bees*, Hugh Lupton, and John Kirkpatrick, and persuaded several of these to participate in the conference's closing plenary session, successfully encouraging members of the general public to engage in this event alongside academic paper-givers. We have ensured the sustainability of the impact of our research activities in part through wide use of accessible electronic records, such as podcasts and blogs; see e.g. Cooke <http://www.unboundblogzine.com/revamp/category/dr-jennifer-cooke/>; the free-to-view edition of Southey letters that Bolton edited: http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/; O'Byrne's work with the Nottingham Irish Studies Group: <http://www.nottinghamisg.org.uk/>; a range of materials written by Spraggs about the googlebooks controversy, which led to thousands of website hits and invitations to submit to government bodies on copyright; see <http://blog.authorsrights.org.uk/2011/06/08/hargreaves-review-extended-collective-licensing-and-orphan-works/>.

With a view to influencing public understanding and enjoyment of past cultural artefacts and so influencing **Civil Society**, several colleagues have responded to requests from television and radio to contribute to broadcasts on such topics as food in Shakespeare's day (Fitzpatrick, BBC radio 4), sixteenth-century midwifery (Hobby, BBC 1 The One Show), early cookery (Hobby, BBC 4), highwaymen and crime (Spraggs, BBC Radio 4 and Three Counties Radio), and early Quaker diaries (Gill, Keo Films). Hobby's edition of a sixteenth-century midwifery manual, *The Birth of Mankind*, was also used in a public exhibition at the Wellcome Library in 2009, and recorded in their blog <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2009/06/the-birth-of-mankind>.

In Performance, our activities included organization of the *Object Theatre* events outlined in the Case Study below, and supporting our research student, Pinchbeck, in taking performances based on his PhD research to the Edinburgh Festival in 2012 and 2013, enriching **Cultural life**. We also originated the AHRC-funded Knowledge Transfer Project, *Shakespeare and London Theatres*. This project worked with the Victoria and Albert Museum to develop **educational** resources on Shakespeare's London that could be accessed in print and on smart-phones by tourists, with an enduring legacy in the Museum's increased understanding of the wealth of its resources.

A very significant indicator of the vibrancy of the Unit's approach to impact is shown in the work of its research students, who have embraced the goal of ensuring that their research has an effect beyond the academic world. Instances of such a commitment include work for the BBC World Service for broadcasts about the Arab Spring (Elayan, 2012); providing materials for a display in

Impact template (REF3a)

Devon Record Office on early Baptists (Adcock, 2011); talking to a local history society about the experiences of First World War soldiers (Ette, 2011); and providing research materials on early-modern breastfeeding to the best-selling author for teenagers Ann Turnbull (Read, 2012). In a similar spirit, when Woods and Boyle organized a workshop on Shakespeare's contemporaries at the University, they not only invited to it people from outside the academic world, but recorded key aspects of the day's events on an open-access website <http://outoftheshadowofshakespeare.wordpress.com/>. We have established a shared understanding and practice that where our research can be drawn on to enrich people's cultural lives, we will seek out partner organizations to work with. Reporting on such links and plans annually also ensures that key relationships, such as those with the BBC and Charnwood Arts, continue to grow.

c. Strategy and plans

Having recently won funding for two new projects, the establishment of a student-run Press, and the appointment of a co-ordinator for a Local History and Creative Writing project, our **immediate plans** are to prioritise the impact of these. Beyond that, we will continue to **build on successful existing practices**, for instance organizing a further Knowledge-Transfer conference on 'Women, Religion, and the Body' in July 2014; working with the University's Research and Enterprise Offices to identify new impact opportunities and define key research-users, audiences and beneficiaries; exploring opportunities for interdisciplinary research-with-impact (for example, Mangan is in discussions with Public Health England about a project to investigate how drama could contribute to large-scale emergency preparedness training exercises). We will also develop the projects in the current case studies: the *Man of the Heart* website will be completed as a full archive of the oral history research and performances; the *Object Theatre Network* has applied for HEA funding to further develop its insights in the context of the training of industry professionals; the *Quaker Women* project has agreed to run further workshops and to make illustrative video-recordings. Regular meetings are scheduled with key regional partners to review the success of our partnerships and to plan new projects. **Additional strategic decisions** have been taken to enhance future impact, focused on the development of University-wide interdisciplinary research challenges; these will enable significant impact through reaching audiences beyond those with an established interest in the Arts and Humanities. **Specific mechanisms to enable these strategies** include working closely with the University publicity officers so as to maximise opportunities for publicising research outcomes; organizing knowledge dissemination events; providing staff impact coaching sessions to raise awareness of the types of activities that can lead to impact; enhancing mentoring structures to assist staff in applications to funding sources to support impact; ensuring that staff have access to peers with whom to discuss and identify pathways to impact at an early stage of a project; and seeing that success is rewarded. Activities of our most recently appointed colleagues provide good examples here: Read, mentored by Mangan, is developing KT results from her research into early-modern bodies; Adcock's experience in working with Local History groups is being disseminated to colleagues; Tearle's popular *Interesting Literature* blog is providing a model for developments in the Unit's web presence.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies have been selected to show how the approaches outlined above worked in practice. The *Man of the Heart Project* benefitted from Research Office guidance to gain the funding to bring its Indian director and musicians to Europe for performances, and our partnership with Charnwood Arts was a crucial factor in bringing in audiences from Asian communities both locally and nationally. Subsequent Indian tours in 2013 were supported by HEIF funding. The case study *Inspiring Contemporary Quakers* benefitted from access to the University's excellent audio-recording facilities so as to be able fully to exploit the research expertise of Hobby and Gill in the materials it produced for the Quaker Kindlers group. This project, like *Man of the Heart* in 2012, was also supported through its nomination for a University Enterprise Award in 2013, gaining further publicity for the projects, and demonstrating to colleagues that impact activities will be recognised and rewarded by the University. Finally, the *Object Theatre* project gained its AHRC funding with advice from the Research and Enterprise Offices, and tapped into the local and national networks of the University's Arts Centre, RADAR, ensuring strong general public attendance. This provided a basis that we are now building on both for *Object Theatre* and for our broader programme of planned impact activities.