

## Impact template (REF3a)

<b>Institution:</b> Bangor University
<b>Unit of assessment:</b> 29 English Language and Literature
<b>a. Context</b>
<p>The School's diverse research activities form an integral part of our impact mission to inform, to educate and to entertain, especially in the areas of historically informed criticism and creative writing and critical reflection upon it. The main non-academic beneficiaries of our research activities include (1) non-academic readers of primarily canonical literature; (2) creative writers and readers of contemporary literature; and (3) a diversity of more specialist groups, such as bereaved women, and financial institutions in the City of London. The School is committed to serving local, national and international constituencies, strengthening our bonds within Wales but always extending our international reach.</p>
<b>b Approach to impact</b>
<p>The School's approach to impact during the REF period may be evidenced in three main strategic areas: historically informed criticism; creative writing; and projects targeting specialist user groups that may not be traditionally associated with the cultures of literary and creative writing.</p> <p><i>Historically informed criticism:</i> there continues to be a long-established readership for and an interest in the lives, beliefs and works of major authors writing in English that extends beyond university students and fellow scholars and is manifest in television and radio coverage, in the cultural coverage of broadsheet journalism and literary magazines, and in the audiences served by cultural associations outside the universities. Outside our case studies, it quickly becomes evident that our many and various research activities respond keenly to such audiences through our commitment to be present in an increasing range of public fora (e.g. academic print culture; print and broadcasting media; public talks (local, national and international); membership of public bodies) as well as a multiplying number of e-platforms (e.g. School web pages; blogs; discussion groups; e-journals).</p> <p>Exploiting expertise and resources located in North Wales, for example, <b>Brown's</b> research on <i>R. S. Thomas</i> has enjoyed a wealth of attention from the wider public and the media. In 2013 alone, the <i>Uncollected Verse</i> was billed by <i>The Guardian</i> as 'a book to look out for' and followed by a host of reviews to a wide range of audiences, e.g.: in <i>The Spectator</i>, <i>The Literary Review</i>, and <i>The Financial Times</i>; poems from the edition were reviewed and read on air on BBC Radio 3; in the Welsh language journal <i>Go!wg</i>; interviews with <b>Brown</b> and/or co-editor Walford Davies were broadcast on BBC Radio Wales and BBC S4C; <b>Brown</b> delivered the 2013 Welsh Academy Gwyn Jones Lecture at the Hay Literary Festival and a presentation at the Harlech Literary Festival. In terms of the BU campus, such activities have led to <b>Brown</b> curating a major exhibition of Thomas's work (2013) drawn substantially from the resources of the Centre in commemoration of the centenary of the poet's birth.</p> <p><b>Corns's</b> biography of John Milton also commemorated an anniversary, the quatercentenary of Milton's birth. The cultural media paid significant attention to this major project and the authors variously spoke, among other venues, on BBC Radio 4's <i>Today</i> programme, BBC World Service and on local radio in New England (2008). There were public lectures by <b>Corns</b>, e.g., to the Socialist History Association and the Thackeray Society (the literary society of the Reform Club). <b>Corns's</b> work on Winstanley occasioned a second appearance at the Socialist History Association, and his work in progress, on <i>Paradise Lost</i>, was presented at the inaugural public lecture of the Society for Renaissance Studies (Welsh Section) at Trinity-St. David's University and to a meeting of the Friends of the Rare Book Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Moreover, the Milton biography enjoyed widespread newspaper and journal coverage after its publication: in <i>The Daily Telegraph</i>, <i>The Independent</i>, <i>The Times Higher Education Supplement</i>, <i>The Guardian</i>, <i>The London Review of Books</i> and <i>The New York Times</i>. Accessing a range of other constituencies, <b>Colclough</b> addressed the Royal Cambrian Academy of the Arts on 'Picturing the Brontes' and <b>Price's</b> engagement with a wider readership is evidenced by the short-listing of his <i>The Screenplay</i> for the 2011 Richard Wall Memorial Award of the Theatre Library Association.</p>

**Wilcox's** work in progress includes the edition of *All's Well that Ends Well* for the Arden series, which occasioned her invitation to give a pre-performance lecture on the play at the Globe Theatre (2011). The continuing influence of her research on Herbert in this assessment period led to her involvement in the Salisbury Festival (2010) - guided walk, poetry reading and discussion, public lecture. Her Herbert edition (see RAE 2008) has led to: the composer Barry Ferguson (who has set Herbert lyrics to new music) including a dedication to Wilcox and composing commentaries responding to her edition notes; and the sculptor Martin Wenham (whose 'Silent Voices' exhibition of sculpture was at the Goldmark Gallery, Uppingham, 2013) acknowledges in the accompanying catalogue that her edition was the inspiration which led to his basing several of his works on lines from Herbert. Wilcox was invited to give literary-related sermons to assembled congregations e.g. at Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire (2011), and at Grove City, Pennsylvania (2013 – also simultaneously broadcast on the radio).

The School showcased research and creative work performed by its senior scholars in February 2008 at the University itself and invited popular fiction writer, honorary fellow and professor **Philip Pullman** to deliver the primary address. This event entitled 'Upon My Word!' was attended by more than 600 people and offered a key opportunity for a diverse audience both in Q&A sessions as well as more informal gatherings to engage with the whole scholarly community of the School of English. Service to this regional and national Welsh constituency and opportunities to demonstrate the School's areas of academic expertise have also continued in **Webb's** establishment of reading groups for university and North Wales communities which target Welsh Writing in English and **Willie's** membership of the consultative body for the Welsh School's Examination Board (WJEC) with a view to developing the English literature curriculum for future generations and responding to the changing landscape of the discipline.

*Creative Writing:* the School of English at BU was one of the first UK HE institutions to pioneer the study of creative writing in the university classroom and the School's commitment to disseminate knowledge of its writers to the widest range of audiences matches those of its ambitions for its literary studies outputs. The impact of the publications and activities of **Gregson, Ozumba, Rumens** and **Skoulding** is evidenced in a number of media, publishing and performing environments. **Gregson** is the Wales editor of Salt publishing house with a particular portfolio to encourage submissions to the Press. Since 1993, he has organised the North Wales-Bangor University Visiting Poets speaker series, bringing together students and local audiences to hear readings and interviews with the best of today's British poets in the University and at locations elsewhere in the region. His commitment to the larger cultural environment and the critical interface between creativity and criticism finds expression in his many reviews for the *TLS*, *Poetry London*, *Stand*, and *Poetry Wales*. The success of **Ozumba's** first novel, *The Shadow of a Smile* has been such that it was subsequently translated into German (2010) and Turkish (2011) and reviewed on German radio: SWR2 'Die Buchkritik' (The Book Review). The novel, which has now appeared as an audio-book, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize and the Desmond Elliott Prize. He was honoured by the Nigerian High Commissioner at a special reception (2010) and his novel was discussed on the BBC World Service as well as receiving numerous press reviews, including appearances in *The Observer's* Books of the Year 2009, *The Independent* (2009) in addition to *The New Black Magazine* and the *Nürnberg Zeitung*. Since 2008 **Rumens** has written the popular weekly poetry blog, *Poem of the Week*, for *Guardian Books Online*, where she presents an introductory essay to a poem as a means of encouraging public dialogue. That this blog provokes new ways of thinking about poetry is evidenced by the steady stream of comments it attracts on a weekly basis, often reaching over 200. While the blog has built up a following of regular posters, newcomers continually appear, not only from the UK but also India, New Zealand, the USA and Ireland. The blog brings new work to large mainstream audiences.

*Specialist groups* reached by the School's research include the constituency linked with the ongoing Wales Beacon project (jointly **Wilcox** and **Niebrzydowski** with links to Aberystwyth University, UCL and the Reader Organisation). This project, 'Past Loss, Present Consolation', employed pre-modern women's writing as an aid in bereavement counselling. The venture resulted

in an anthology of medieval and early modern women's writing about death, loss, grieving and consolation, for the use of/with bereaved women in our own time, working on bibliotherapy and discursive techniques in co-operation with local and national charitable organisations. The project led to a public presentation by **Wilcox** and **Niebrzydowski** to Welsh Assembly government ministers and members on behalf of arts and humanities research in Wales (2011). **Sullivan** presented research to financial institutions in the city of London, addressing concerns surrounding the recruitment and employment of arts graduates. Her research interest in the interface of financial management and literature extends back to her monograph on the 'rhetoric of credit' submitted to the 2008 RAE. She and Eben Muse (School of Creative and Media Studies, Bangor) were principal investigators on a project funded by the Higher Education Academy (2007/8) to investigate the potential benefits to financial institutions of the modes of thinking associated with graduates with degrees in English literature. The resulting report 'The value of literary analysis to City financial institutions' was reviewed in the journal *Wordplay* as well as the regional press, such as *The Western Mail*.

### **c. Impact: Strategy and Leadership**

The commitment of the School of English to the dissemination of its scholarly and creative outputs has been long-standing and strategic in nature. Throughout the REF assessment period, the School has continued to innovate in the ways it has sought widening audiences for its research and creative output. The School's investment in poetry readings and presentations at literary festivals, for example, pre-dates the assessment period. Nonetheless, during the present assessment period School staff have extended their activities to museums, art galleries, theatres and theatrical companies, literary festivals, church congregations, library exhibition spaces, television and radio interviews, podcasts and blogsites sponsored by prestigious platforms such as *The Guardian*, to presentations to political audiences such as the Welsh Assembly, to reading groups, and to secondary education examination boards. Fostered partly through the appointment of ECRs during the assessment period, the School has made increasing use of new media to showcase its achievements while never losing sight of its traditional audiences of students, alumni and the regional population (e.g. 'Upon My Word!', see above).

Nonetheless, aware that academe needs to constantly extend itself beyond its conventional and well-tryed audiences to render itself more meaningful to wider communities, Bangor's School of English has formulated a systematic engagement with many and various environments in which to publicise its academic findings and creative publications. Quite apart from its own research committee which meets on a regular basis to review the School's activities and to reflect upon and share good practice and impact potentiality of research avenues of enquiry, the School takes full advantage of staff development meetings and annual Professional Development Reviews in order to keep fully updated of staff achievements, progress and ambitions in impact generation. It has an internal Impact Officer, who represents the School on a College-wide Committee, chaired by the College Impact Champion. The School continues to liaise with Bangor's marketing and publicity departments as well as learned societies in order to strengthen its collaborations with interested and/or informed communities.

### **d. Relationship to the case studies**

Each of the School's case studies constitutes a representative example of its long-standing and ongoing investment in widening access to its achievements. The originality, strategic planning and collaborative commitment evidenced above are showcased in a developed and sustained way by detailing the unfolding academic and creative experiences of **Radulescu** and **Skoulding** relating to specific projects. **Radulescu's** submission shows how cutting-edge historically-informed research can support a popularizing process of media dissemination, fulfilling both the educational and the informational functions of the School's mission. Equally representative, the case of **Skoulding** exemplifies how her creative work has forged relationships with a wide range of different audiences and constituencies, bearing witness to a rich impact upon the cultural life of Wales and beyond.