

Institution: University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: C17
Title of case study: Community archaeology as Citizen Science: embedding research into a regional heritage agenda
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Caistor Roman Town Project has transformed understanding of one of East Anglia's most significant archaeological sites and has informed the management strategies of the site's principal stakeholders (South Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Museums Service and the Norfolk Archaeological Trust) in relation to presentation and interpretation. The project epitomises 'citizen science', engendering sustained community involvement in archaeological research (c. 230 volunteers contributing over 35,000 hours), including the establishment of a charity that has enabled the volunteers to develop and support further community archaeology initiatives in the region. More than 15,000 visitors to excavations over 12 weeks and widespread coverage through internet, print news and television have broadened international understanding of archaeology and the site.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research is focused upon the remains of <i>Venta Icenorum</i> (Caistor St. Edmund) in Norfolk. Although Caistor is one of only 3 Roman regional capitals in Britain that do not lie beneath later settlements, the site did not see major excavation in the 19th and 20th centuries. Since 2006 the results of the Caistor project have radically changed our understanding of the chronology, development and nature of <i>Venta Icenorum</i>, and the ways in which the region's inhabitants responded to the introduction of urbanism. This has wider implications for our understanding of the relationship between Rome and the peoples of its provinces. In particular the research is beginning to show that the local population played an active role in adapting the urban form to reflect their own needs and aspirations.</p> <p>The project has been at the forefront of using cart-mounted Caesium Vapour magnetometry for large-scale rapid capture of geophysical data. To date geophysical survey has covered 52 hectares and has produced a complete plan of the entire Roman town and its environs (3.5; 3.6), providing evidence of a palimpsest of multi-period occupation, which has been tested through excavation (3.1; 3.2). The project has also used innovative combinations of core samples, magnetometry and deposit modelling through Electrical Resistivity Tomography to model the changing riverine context of the Roman town. In addition the project has also pioneered techniques of studying site history through examination of off-site traces of historic pollution, using chemical samples from flood plain cores dated by AMS radiocarbon dating.</p> <p>The project has included 4 major excavation seasons at Caistor itself, together with trial excavations at an outlying site (3.4). The excavations (funded by the British Academy) have targeted features identified by the geophysical survey and have been used to refine the survey data (3.3). Key findings have included redating the street grid, the identification of a possible timber forum and the confirmation of middle Saxon settlement at the town. An accompanying field survey project has covered over 500 hectares of land around the site, locating a number of new sites.</p> <p>The project is led by the PI (Bowden - UoN) assisted by Dr David Bescoby (UoN/University of East Anglia) who has carried out the geophysical and environmental surveys. The field survey is overseen by the PI but is run entirely by the project's local volunteers, who are divided into 6 teams based on their times of availability. Excavations are directed by the PI, while other members of the Dept. of Archaeology collaborate in aspects of the research. This includes the study of human, faunal and botanical remains by post-graduate students to the mutual benefit of both students and project, and ceramic studies carried out by Gwladys Monteil (formerly Leverhulme post-doctoral fellow in the department). The volunteers' active co-production of the research findings gives the articles in section 3 dual status as academic outputs and as elements of the impact in their own right.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>3.1 BOWDEN W. 2013a. "The urban plan of <i>Venta Icenorum</i> and its relationship with the Boudican revolt", <i>Britannia</i> (Listed in REF 2; leading journal on the archaeology of Roman Britain).</p>

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3.2 BOWDEN, W. 2013b "Townscape and identity at Caistor-by-Norwich", in Eckardt, H and Rippon, S. (eds) 2013. *Living and working in the Roman world. Essays in honour of Michael Fulford on his 65th birthday*. JRA Suppl. Ser. 95. (Portsmouth, R.I), 47-62 (Available on request; prestigious Festschrift article).

3.3 BESCOBY, D. and BOWDEN, W. 2013. "The detection and mapping of Saxon sunken-featured buildings at Caistor St Edmund", *Archaeological Prospection* 20(1), 53-57 (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/arp.1441/full>; leading international journal on archaeological survey methodology and techniques).

3.4 BOWDEN, W., 2011. "Architectural innovation in the land of the Iceni: a new complex near Venta Icenorum (Norfolk)", *Journal of Roman Archaeology*. 24, 382-388 (Available on request; leading international journal on Roman archaeology).

3.5 BESCOBY, D., BOWDEN, W. and CHROSTON, P. N., 2009. Magnetic survey at Venta Icenorum, Caistor St Edmund: Survey strategies and initial results, *Archaeological Prospection* 16(4), 287-291. (DOI: 10.1002/arp.363; leading international journal on archaeological survey methodology and techniques).

3.6 BOWDEN, W. and BESCOBY D., 2008. The plan of Venta Icenorum (Caistor-by-Norwich): interpreting a new geophysical survey. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 21, 325-334 (Listed in REF 2; leading international journal on Roman archaeology).

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

The pathway to impact in this case study has two strands. The first strand relates to the co-production of the research during the excavations at Caistor, with Bowden and Bescoby providing the technical, scholarly and methodological framework, and volunteers participating in the excavations and the creation of research data. As such, the research (and the processes that underpin it) is a primary impact outcome, equipping the community of volunteers with new skills and providing valuable personal and professional experience. The second strand relates to the concomitant high public profile of the project (supported by media and public engagement activity) which has highlighted its value to a range of policy makers whose remit encompasses heritage management. This has been recognised in the embedding of the project in their development strategies.

Community archaeology as citizen science – co-producing knowledge and gaining skills

The co-production of knowledge is at the heart of citizen science: From its inception in 2006, the Caistor Project has been designed and executed in a way that has directly linked the research process and results with a range of user communities and organisations. Their work has contributed to the advancement of knowledge, and in turn they have **developed skills and experience that have sometimes been of a transformative nature**. To-date over 200 volunteers from the Norfolk community (of which around 100 are actively involved in the research at any time), have contributed 35,000 hours to the research programme. Coming from a range of backgrounds, from lawyers to builders, the volunteers form the bulk of the excavation and finds processing team, undertaking an extensive regional field survey project between autumn and spring. The survey constitutes a significant research initiative that could not be carried out without community involvement and the relationship between the project and Norfolk County Council (NCC). The volunteers' work is explicitly acknowledged in the outputs in section 3.

The **impact of their involvement on volunteers** ranges from the emotional: 'I found my very first (and only) Roman coin and I can still recall the elation I felt at finding and holding in my hand something that had last been in the hand of a Roman so many years ago', to the professional and practical: 'It has been very beneficial for me, in terms of career development and improving my skill-set'. Many participants also highly value the social element of their involvement in the project (5.1).

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Through the establishment of a charity (Caistor Roman Project Ltd (CRP)) in 2009, of which Bowden is a Trustee, a **sustainable future for the volunteer group** is being secured. The charity has already supported volunteers in using their new skills and experience to undertake further community activity including running events for the Young Archaeologists Club, using the Caistor project's methodologies to develop their own community research projects and advising other community groups on setting up archaeological research projects (5.1). The project's value to the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18 of the South Norfolk Alliance (local Strategic Partnership for South Norfolk comprising statutory, voluntary, community and business organisations) was recognised in the Alliance's funding of the volunteer programme and public outreach programme for 2010-2011.

Adding to the public understanding of history and the environment

In addition to the new knowledge and skills developed by volunteers participating in the project, there has also been a focus on sharing the research results with a wider public through broadcast and social media and public talks and thus **contributing to a wider public understanding both of archaeology and of Roman history**: The project was the focus of a Channel 4 *Time Team* special in 2011 which received 2,321,000 viewers on its first showing and has been regularly repeated since. It also formed a major component in an episode of BBC's *The Flying Archaeologist*, viewed by 723,000 on its first showing (06.05.12) (with 43,000 i-player viewings in the following week). The project maintains a strong media profile, featuring on BBC Radio 4, BBC Look East, ITV Anglia, Radio Norfolk, Radio Nottingham, and in the *Eastern Daily Press* and other local print media within the assessment period. Reporting by livescience.com of the findings published in Bowden 2011 was picked up by multiple internet newsfeeds including discovery.com, msn.com, dailymail.co.uk and the Huffington Post and was subsequently reposted in multiple internet fora, including three audience-generated Youtube videos, demonstrating sustained public engagement with the research (5.2).

The excavations were open to the public 7 days a week, resulting in 15,000 visitors over 12 weeks in 2009- 2012. Visitors were provided with a site guide and an exhibition (sponsored by the Foyle Foundation) while excavations are explained by project volunteers. Activities were also run for visiting school parties together with workshops for volunteers in ceramic studies and faunal remains (run by post-graduates from the Dept. of Archaeology). In 2011 two activity days were run in conjunction with the BBC's *Hands-on History* project and these were repeated in 2012. The success of these events encouraged South Norfolk Council to revive its own Caistor Family Day in 2013. Bowden has done c. 35 lectures to the public/local societies (ranging from BBC Hands-on History events to the Algarve Archaeological Society) reaching an estimated 2200 people (5.3). A YouTube video about the project has been viewed over 72,000 times (63 likes and 52 comments) (5.2).

The scale of this media and public engagement with the research project represents a significant **contribution to enhanced cultural understanding of archaeology and its methods, and of (Roman) history**.

Informing and influencing heritage management strategies

The Norfolk Archaeological Trust's Ten-Year Site Management Plan (2013-23) for Caistor noted that "the project's research has transformed our understanding of *Venta Icenorum* and its suburbs, both for the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods" (5.4). This changed understanding and the associated media and public engagement have been significant drivers in the project's partner organisations' subsequent development of revised management strategies towards the site, which are in turn factors in the **improved management and conservation of cultural heritage**. The Norfolk Archaeological Trust (site owners), Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service (HES), South Norfolk Council (who manage public access to the site), Norfolk Museums Service and English Heritage have all used the results of the project in the development of management strategies towards the Roman town. Examples include:

- The NAT Ten-Year Site Management Plan for Caistor (2013-23) in which the project results will form the basis for an entirely new interpretation scheme for the Roman town. In 2013-14 this will

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include new interpretation panels (funded by Natural England) and a new guidebook (funded by the Trust) (5.4).

- The research contributed to English Heritage's decision to significantly extend the area protected as part of the Scheduled Monument (5.5).
- Norfolk HES uses the results of the project to inform management strategies towards the site and its surrounding landscape (5.6).

Project results have informed new content for tourists, thereby **enriching the tourist experience**: a revised display relating to the site at Norwich Castle Museum has been visited by up to 180,000 people per annum since 2009, while Project volunteers have carried out extensive work on early archives relating to the site held by the Museum, resulting in this archive material being put on display to the public for the first time. The research also informed a mobile-phone tour of the site trialled by South Norfolk Council in 2008-10. The increased public profile of the site resulting from the project has also resulted in **greater visitor numbers** and greater use of one of the most significant green spaces in South Norfolk Council's portfolio (5.7 & 5.8). The increased uptake of heritage resources by tourists described here has **tangible economic and prestige benefits** to the sites, and also serves to further the public engagement mission of the Caistor project by extending its reach.

Contributing to the wider preservation of cultural heritage

The project's public engagement activity has **helped partner organisations to secure further funding**, thereby contributing to the wider **preservation of public cultural heritage**: The project was specifically referenced by the Norfolk Archaeological Trust in its successful 2011 application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for emergency funds (c. £380,000) to purchase an additional 60 acres of the archaeological site (5.9). The application cited the public benefit evidenced by volunteer involvement with the Caistor project, visitor numbers to the excavations and the transformation in understanding of the site through the research. Similarly, the research and outreach value of the project were also cited by Norfolk's HES service in support of a successful bid to English Heritage to extend the National Mapping Programme (digitising all crop-mark data for the region) (5.10).

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

Local authority involvement

- 5.1 Caistor User Survey 2013 (including information about follow-on projects undertaken by volunteers) (available on file).
- 5.2 Caistor Media Engagement Report (available on file).
- 5.3 Table listing presentations to the community and project partners (available on file).
- 5.4 The Norfolk Archaeological Trust Ten-Year Site Management Plan (2013-23) (available on file).
- 5.5 Factual statement from East of England Inspector, English Heritage corroborating English Heritage's decision to significantly extend the area protected as part of the Scheduled Monument.
- 5.6 Factual statement from County Archaeologist, Norfolk County Council corroborating claim that the results of the project support NCC management strategies for the site and region.
- 5.7 Factual statement from South Norfolk Council to corroborate the claim that the increased public profile of the site resulting from the project (see below) has also resulted in greater visitor numbers.
- 5.8 Factual statement from Caistor Parish Council to corroborate claim of raised profile and visitor numbers and value to the local community.
- 5.9 Application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund from the Norfolk Archaeological Trust (available on file).
- 5.10 Application to English Heritage National Mapping Programme citing partnership with Caistor project (available on file).