

Institution: University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 17b (Archaeology)
Title of case study: Development of heritage in Orkney
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Specialising in Neolithic archaeology, Professor Colin Richards communicates his research beyond academic audiences to the public through museum and community exhibitions, public lectures, newspapers and television. His work has raised local and international awareness of archaeology in Orkney, and tourism through, for example, the reconstruction of archaeological sites thereby contributing to the UNESCO World Heritage status of Orkney. His research has shaped the international profile of these heritage resources through the regional World Heritage research framework, and public presentation of monuments within the World Heritage Area. Richards' research also underpinned specialist evidence at a public windfarm inquiry, the outcome of which contributed to Orkney Island Council windfarm development Policy.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Richards began archaeological investigations in Orkney in 1986. Whilst initial investigations were undertaken at the University of Glasgow, a series of projects developed and came to fruition at the University of Manchester after 2000.</p> <p>Between 1986-2013 (Manchester period 2000-13), this research focused on the third and fourth millennium BC occupation of Orkney. It was funded by Historic Scotland, Orkney Island Council, British Academy, NERC, Society of Antiquaries of London, and Scotland (total research income £464,658). The underpinning research for the impact described in this case study took the form of fieldwork:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barnhouse and Maeshowe 1987-93 (3.2); 2. Stonehall, Crossiecrown, Wideford Hill, Smerquoy and Muckquoy between 2002-13 (Richards in prep); 3. Vestra Fiold 2001-3; Ring of Brodgar 2008-12 (3.3) coupled with museum displays, academic synthesis and extensive written output. <p>Phases: This research breaks down into three major components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of the relationship between settlement (Barnhouse) and monuments (Stones of Stenness and Maeshowe) in central western Mainland, Orkney. • Settlement and chambered tombs in central Mainland, Orkney. • Monumental construction and landscape in central western Mainland, Orkney. <p>The research is groundbreaking and unusual in terms of both duration (1983 – 2013) and number of new archaeological sites located. More importantly, it was undertaken within a coherent theoretical framework. This allowed a range of diverse archaeological sites, which had previously been treated in isolation, to be amalgamated in interpretative accounts (3.2, 3.3).</p> <p>Orkney is outstanding in having stone built habitations and monuments – making it unique in the archaeology of NW Europe. It is this relationship that formed the core of the first and second phases of work (3.2, in prep). Finally, the construction and constitution of the two stone circles in the WHS area formed the theme of the third phase of research in Orkney (3.1, 3.3).</p> <p>Key findings: The direct products gained from this considerable body of research include the discovery and investigation of six new Neolithic settlements: Barnhouse, Stonehall, Wideford Hill and Crossiecrown, the former of which was reconstructed for public presentation (5.4). Two further new Neolithic settlements were investigated (Smerquoy and Redland) in 2012-3. Other excavations at Vestra Fiold and Ring of Brodgar have produced a wealth of new information for the World</p>

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Heritage sites (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, & 5.4). This regional approach, with the integration of a series of smaller components into a larger whole, has transformed understanding and resulted in a new set of interpretations of the Neolithic of Orkney (5.2, 5.3 & 5.4). This strand of research is still extremely productive and continues to feed into current impact activities (e.g. public open days and newspaper coverage April-May 2013)

3. References to the research (AOR- available on request)

Research outputs:

3.1 Richards, C. 2004. A choreography of construction: monuments, mobilization and social organisation in late Neolithic Orkney, in J. Cherry, C. Scarre & S. Shennan (eds.) *Explaining social change*, Cambridge: McDonald Institute Research Monograph. (AOR)

3.2 Richards, C. (ed) 2005. *Dwelling among the Monuments: the Neolithic village of Barnhouse, Maeshowe passage grave and surrounding monuments at Stenness, Orkney*, McDonald Institute Research Monograph, Cambridge. (AOR).

The above monograph constitutes the major research output – it reported an important site discovered and excavated by Richards (and reconstructed for public presentation) in the heart of the WHS area, the monograph was described as ‘innovative’ (Pollard 2006, 468) and ‘ground breaking’ (Hunter 2005, 95) in approach and represented a major contribution to the discipline.

3.3 Richards, C. 2013. *Building the Great Stone Circles of the North*. Oxford: Windgather Press (AOR).

The above monograph constitutes the second major research output for this case study.

On the basis of this research Richards made a major contribution to the UNESCO ‘Heart of Neolithic Orkney’ World Heritage Site Research Agenda produced by Historic Scotland:

3.4 Richards, C. 2005. Period based research and temporality, in J. Downes, S. M. Foster, C. R. Wickham-Jones with J. Callister (eds.) *The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site: Research Agenda*, Edinburgh: Historic Scotland Monographs, 37-40. (AOR)

3.5 Jones, S. & C. Richards, 2005a. Artefacts, monuments and cultural identity, in J. Downes, S. M. Foster, C. R. Wickham-Jones with J. Callister (eds.) *The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site: Research Agenda*, Edinburgh: Historic Scotland Monographs, 80-86. (AOR)

4. Details of the impact

Context

During the period 2000-2005 ongoing research was conducted and excavations at Barnhouse and Maeshowe were brought to publication (3.2). In 2013 the Cuween-Wideford landscape project, where six new Neolithic settlements were investigated, was completed. The Great Stone Circles Project (2001-12) fieldwork was brought to publication in 2013 (3.3).

Pathways to impact

Having been presented in local, national and international academic conferences and published in a range of outlets ranging from a leading monograph series (McDonald Institute) to the Orcadian Newspaper, the research has led to museum displays, exhibitions, local lectures, radio and television presentations. Richards’ research also informs the interpretation and presentation of Orcadian WHS through Historic Scotland books (e.g. Maeshowe, Heart of Neolithic Ork), guide books and web sites (e.g. ‘orkneyjar’).

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Reach and significance

The mechanism of impact is through a prolonged period of activity that falls into four areas:

1. Enhancing tourism and enriching visitor experience.
2. Contributing to the awarding of World Heritage listed status to the archaeological sites constituting *the Heart of Neolithic Orkney* World Heritage landscape.
3. Providing expert evidence for use in the Merranblo wind-farm inquiry.
4. Impact on public discourse of the Orcadian archaeological heritage.

Outcomes of the research responsible for the first two areas of impact are: first, the reconstruction and presentation of the Neolithic settlement of Barnhouse (Richards 2005). This has a direct impact on tourism (e.g. 70,000 per annum) [5.6 & 5.10].

Elements of Richards' field project (Barnhouse and Maeshowe) underpinned the successful award of UNESCO World Heritage listed status for the series of sites that form ***the Heart of Neolithic Orkney*** (see 3.2, 3.4, 3.5) [5.8]. Subsequently, Richards has taken a key advisory role in the public interpretation and presentation of the World Heritage monuments, and his research features heavily in Historic Scotland Ranger training, guide books and interpretation panels [5.10]. Further impact of research on heritage presentation and interpretation was achieved through membership of the UNESCO WHS research committee (2000-13). In this capacity Richards has provided a leading role in determining the research priorities and presentational components of the *Heart of Neolithic Orkney* WHS [5.10].

The third area of impact is the utilization of Richards' research as key evidence in the Merranblo windfarm inquiry, held in Stromness (January 2008) [5.2, 5.3 and 5.7]. The proposed development was to be positioned on a hilltop overlooking the WHS. Richards research on the relationship between landscape and monuments in the WHS provided pivotal evidence against the development, particularly in the context of 'setting', *'the definition of 'setting'... was a central question considered by the inquiry'*, and *'this is where Richards' research proved crucial, because the windfarm development team proposed an entirely different notion of 'setting' with alternative criteria'* (ibid) [5.2].

Richards was to be the archaeological expert witness, (but was undertaking fieldwork on Easter Island), The Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow assumed this role and drawing on Richards' research argued the case against the development, *'There is no doubt in my mind that the research and theories developed by Prof Richards.... played a fundamental role in the final decision of the Reporter'* [5.3]. This judgement also provided the basis for a new OIC Planning Policy concerning wind-farm development in Orkney [5.5].

The final impact concerns public discourse. Throughout the period of research Richards has given regular public lectures throughout Europe and across Orkney. Also, numerous radio (local BBC and national BBC –Radio 4) and television broadcasts on Orcadian archaeology. This is supplemented by numerous columns [5.9] in the *Orcadian*, *'the research has involved sustained collaboration with the local media, archaeological groups and the Orkney public in general - to date, he has written six articles and been a contributor to over 40 in the past decade'* [5.1]. As a policy, Richards has always worked with local museums and communities, *'from the start Richards viewed his excavations as work within the community which should always involve local people'* [5.4], *'Professor Richards' keenness to share his knowledge with the people of Orkney was, and remains, clearly evident in his willingness to engage with the local community'* [5.1]. Growing local appreciation of archaeological heritage is more difficult to define or quantify. One measure is the instigation of archaeological funding by OIC who award £40,000 annually. An increase in awareness also translates into a more educated public who feel they have a vested interest in their own heritage. Again this can be measured in the proportional increase of discovered archaeological sites reported to the Regional Archaeologist [5.5]. Another measure is community involvement in archaeological projects to such an extent that stakeholders (e.g. local farmers) actually provide funds for C14 dates. Overall, Richards' research has had a huge effect on the local awareness of heritage and its presentation and cultural value.

Impact case study (REF3b)**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

All claims referenced in the text.

Testimonials:

- 5.1 Letter from the Editor of the Orcadian newspaper
- 5.2 Letter from the Former Chair and Founding Member of Orkney Skyline Concern
- 5.3 Letter from the Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Glasgow
- 5.4 Letter from the Exhibitions Officer, Orkney Island Council
- 5.5 Letter from the County Archaeologist, Orkney Island Council

Documents submitted to the Public Merranblo Wind Farm Inquiry, Stromness, Orkney:

- 5.6 APL/G/07 Richards, C. (ed) 2005. Dwelling among the Monuments: the Neolithic village of Barnhouse, Maeshowe passage grave and surrounding monuments at Stenness, Orkney, McDonald Institute Research Monograph, Cambridge.
- 5.7 Project 289 (Merranblo) Precognition of Stephen Carter BSc, PhD (2008, pp 16, 17, 19, 20) and Project 289 (Merranblo) Precognition of Dr Kenneth Brophy (Sections 2.3; 3.3; 5.1; 6)

Publications:

- 5.8 Historic Scotland (1999) Nomination of Neolithic Orkney for inclusion in the World heritage List. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland - supporting the impact of Richards contribution to the Merranblo inquiry
- 5.9 The Orcadian newspaper (editions 2008 – 13)
- 5.10 Historic Scotland 2006. Maeshowe and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney. Official Souvenir Guide.