

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Bradford</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: C17</p>
<p>Title of case study: Old Scatness: The Past Providing a Sustainable Future</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The University of Bradford’s internationally renowned research in North Atlantic archaeology at Old Scatness, Shetland has provided a sustainable legacy for the region, enhancing awareness of Shetland’s past. This innovative heritage project is a partnership between the University and the Shetland Amenity Trust and has been critical to new developments in heritage presentation on the islands. The heritage project at Old Scatness pioneered a blend of site preservation and reconstructed buildings combined with an interpretive approach that provides visitors with a stimulating and interactive experience. The consideration of what was a hitherto unknown archaeological area as a World Heritage Site demonstrates the international significance of the research and its impact.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Old Scatness is an enormously complex, multi-period archaeological site focused on a broch surrounded by an Iron Age village, with both earlier and later settlement. The excavations build on a long tradition of work by Bradford in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. The project commenced in 1995 under the co-direction of Dr Steve Dockrill (Lecturer 1995-2004; Senior Lecturer 2004-present) and Dr Julie Bond (Research Fellow 1997-2005; Senior Lecturer 1999-present). They directed an international team with excavations continuing each year until 2007 in tandem with a major programme of post-excavation processing and analysis. A significant chronology research strand led by Dr Cathy Batt (Lecturer 1993-2001; Senior Lecturer 2001-present) has combined radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic and, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, luminescence dating.</p> <p>Although the site was initially little more than an unprepossessing mound, the excavations discovered exceptional levels of preservation, with the broch standing to a height of over three metres, making it one of the best preserved Iron Age buildings in Europe. Associated buildings had wall heights of two metres or more and <i>in situ</i> door lintels. The excavation developed a completely new understanding of Shetland’s past and has significance for wider understanding of Iron Age architecture and social relations. The research demonstrated that the origins of brochs were at least 200 years earlier than previously thought and provided evidence that the Iron Age culture was an indigenous development with continuity of social development until the arrival of Viking settlers in the ninth century AD. The artefacts recovered showed the settlement’s wealth and patronage of craft specialists evidenced by moulds for copper alloy casting and the finding of finely-carved Pictish symbols of a bear and a boar (the latter two representing exceptionally rare evidence for <i>in situ</i> Pictish carvings).</p> <p>The first monograph on the Pictish and Viking settlement at Scatness was published in 2010 (1). Two further volumes will be published in 2014. The research encouraged and achieved the integration of innovative scientific methods within the excavation, making the site a test-bed for developments in scientific dating, environmental analysis, surveying and recording, resulting in outputs including seven completed PhDs (six AHRC-funded), the publication of six book chapters (e.g., 2,3) and seven journal articles (e.g., 4,5,6).</p> <p>The project generated significant additional value serving for 12 years as a centre for field training for students attending from many Universities. International collaborations include the City University New York (where Dockrill and Bond have been appointed as Visiting Professors) and the establishment of a North Atlantic Biocultural Organisation (NABO) Field School. This extended undergraduate field training to graduate students beyond the UK embarking on doctoral research. Local volunteers on Shetland were involved in the excavation from the beginning and took the</p>

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opportunity to train alongside the students. The integrated excavation methodologies developed at Scatness redefined archaeological approaches in the region; they are used as a standard for work in Shetland and have been published as a training manual which is widely accepted as good practice. Learning from the Scatness research was incorporated into new research projects led by members of the team including West Voe, Shetland; Viking Unst, Shetland; the Heart of the Atlantic Project in Faroe; and Rousay, Orkney.

The core funding of the project was awarded to the Shetland Amenity Trust from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of which c. £1.2 million funded the excavation and post-excavation in tandem with funding from other sources including *Historic Scotland* and the *British Academy* and the *Arts and Humanities Research Council* awarded directly to the research team. A key aim of the ERDF funding was to establish a narrative that would offer an attractive and scientifically informed visitor experience promoting cultural identity on the islands as well as enhancing tourism. Archaeology is the mechanism to explain this new narrative, providing an accessible monument with a sequence of buildings representing several millennia of Shetland's past.

3. References to the research

1. Dockrill SJ, Bond JM, Brown LD, Turner VE, Bashford D, Cussans JE and Nicholson RA (eds.) (2010) *Excavations at Old Scatness, Shetland Volume 1: The Pictish Village and Viking Settlement*. Lerwick: Shetland Heritage Publications.
2. Dockrill SJ. (2002) Brochs, economy and power. In Ballin Smith B and Banks I. (eds.) *The Shadow Of The Brochs: The Iron Age In Scotland*. 153-162. Stroud: Tempus.
3. Dockrill SJ. (2003) Broch, wheelhouse, cell: Redefining the Iron Age in Shetland. In Ritchie, A and Downes J (eds.) *Sea Change - Orkney & Northern Europe in the Late Iron Age and After*. 83-94. Brechin: Pinkfoot Press.
4. Guttman EBA, Simpson IA, Dockrill SJ. (2003) Joined-up archaeology at Old Scatness, Shetland: thin section analysis of the site and hinterland. *Environmental Archaeology* 8: 17-31.
5. Dockrill SJ, Outram Z, Batt CM. (2006) Time and Place: a new chronology for the origin of the broch based on the scientific dating programme at the Old Scatness Broch, Shetland. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 136: 89-110.
6. Outram Z, Batt CM, Rhodes EJ, Dockrill SJ. (2010) The integration of chronological and archaeological information to date building construction: an example from Shetland, Scotland, UK. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37: 2821-2830.

Evidence of quality:

Volume 1 of the excavations (1) was subject to peer review. References 4-6 are published in peer review journals.

4. Details of the impact

Shetland is a group of over 100 islands, of which only 15 are currently inhabited. Traces of Neolithic, Pictish, and Viking settlements are seen today in the form of a unique cultural landscape, admired by visitors and valued by the local community, who regard their Scandinavian heritage as a crucial element of their identity. Shetland's tourism industry reflects the importance of the islands' cultural and natural heritage (a). Local agencies estimate that 77% of visitors come to the islands to experience its heritage, contributing over £16 million in direct spend per annum (b).

From the beginning, the Old Scatness project placed an emphasis on facilitating public access and maximising local involvement. During the period of the excavation the team won the British Archaeological Award for best presentation of a project to the public. The site has had significant

national and local media exposure (print, television and web) and guidebooks such as *The Rough Guide to Scotland* include site descriptions. In 2010 Scatness was one of the most visited sites in Shetland, with 6,279 visitors recorded; an increase in 1,000 from the 2009 figures (c). The Shetland Amenity Trust is the heritage agency responsible for the conservation, preservation and management of Shetland's built heritage and it promotes these assets, including Old Scatness, with the help of a carefully designed culture and heritage brand identity (c). As the Trust's annual report states, "*Scatness continues to have an extremely high public profile acting as a tourist centre with guided tours and special workshop events exploring the crafts skills of the past*" (d). The contribution of the site to promoting Shetland's past was highlighted by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs in the Scottish Government in her address to the 2013 multinational Viking Congress. MSP Fiona Hyslop praised Old Scatness as "*a major attraction for visitors to the islands, with its innovative approaches to interpretation*" (e).

A visit to Old Scatness starts with a guided tour. Archaeological information discovered during excavations has been used to create reconstructed buildings adjacent to the site. The reconstructions include two Pictish buildings and one of the aisled roundhouses. When the site is open to the public, the fires are lit and the house dressed daily, so that visitors can feel what it might have been like to live in the Iron Age. Using the skills of experienced dry-stone workers and other craftspeople, demonstrations are given to allow visitors to learn more about how the structures were built and would have functioned. Living History demonstrators are engaged to replicate items and to demonstrate their use. Specialist craft workers work on site: their skills ranging from metal and jewellery working to pottery, textiles, rope making and soapstone working. Scatness has provided employment for five guides and two living history demonstrators. Replica artefacts made by the craft workers sell well in addition to other merchandise including guidebooks, mugs and Pictish style necklaces (c). Education packs have been developed for all 32 schools in Shetland (d). The packs include replica artefacts and the learning is reinforced by a visit to the site to participate in traditional craft activities. In 2009-10, 268 school children visited the site (c).

The impact of heritage promotion is illustrated by the acceptance, in March 2011, of Old Scatness, Mousa and Jarlishof, together described as *The Zenith of Iron Age Shetland*, onto the UK Tentative List for World Heritage Status (f). Inclusion in the tentative list is for sites considered to be of outstanding universal value and can only happen with the support of a wide variety of stakeholders, including local and national government, local communities, NGOs and other interested parties.

Bradford's research at Old Scatness has inspired the design and creation of a range of products crafted by Shetland manufacturers thus contributing to the cultural identity and economic well-being of the islands. *The Old Scatness Collection* comprises ten items such as jewellery and other artworks based on the bear and boar symbol stones (now on display along with other artefacts from the site in the £11.6 million Shetland Museum opened in 2007). Valhalla Brewery's *Old Scatness Ale* is brewed using an ancient form of barley, known as *bere*, which excavation proved was grown at the site in the Iron Age. This evidence is core to the marketing of *Old Scatness Ale* and is cited on the brewery's website; the beer is also being supplied further afield to mainland Scotland and Norway (g).

The General Manager of the Shetland Amenity Trust has praised the "*unparalleled visitor experience*" that has resulted from the collaboration with Bradford researchers noting that the site has "*helped stimulate heritage tourism*" and "*benefited the local economy in many ways*" (h). New investment at Old Scatness is planned consisting of a £7.8 million visitor centre covering the site with a dome providing greater access (i,j). This interpretive centre, will provide "*a year round, world-class visitor attraction ... maximising the potential for dramatic interpretation using state of the art media*", supporting a sustainable future for heritage presentation at the site.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a. Undiscovered Scotland
<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/shetland/oldscatnessbroch/index.html>
- b. Leask A. and Rihova I. (2010) The role of heritage tourism in the Shetland Islands. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 4(2): 118-129.
- c. Review of Old Scatness, Shetland Amenity Trust internal document (2010).
- d. Shetland Amenity Trust 2011, *Annual Report for 2010*. Lerwick: Shetland Amenity Trust
- e. Fiona Hyslop MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs) address to the 17th Viking Congress, Lerwick, Shetland (August 2013). The text of the address has been made available by the Cabinet Secretary.
- f. Inclusion on the Tentative List for World Heritage Status
whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5677/
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-12818008>
- g. Old Scatness Ale
<http://www.valhallabrewery.co.uk/web/index.php/valhalla-ales/old-scatness/>
<http://www.valhallabrewery.co.uk/web/index.php/latest-news/>
- h. Testimonial, General Manager, Shetland Amenity Trust, dated 8th November 2013.
- i. Visitor Centre
<http://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2008/10/17/'world-class'-old-scatness-visitor-centre-designed-to-take-on-orkney-at-heritage>
<http://www.grovesrainearchitects.com/projects/project/88#>
- j. The Shetland Marketing Strategy: Promote Shetland (January 2011) Shetland Amenity Trust
http://www.shetland.gov.uk/economic_development/documents/TheShetlandMarketingStrategy.pdf