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Institution: University of Reading
Unit of Assessment: 17 Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology: Archaeology
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Archaeology at the University of Reading has two clearly focused research groups (Social Archaeology and Scientific Archaeology) and is characterised by a distinctive interdisciplinary approach that combines social archaeology with innovative expertise in archaeological science, in order to research the archaeology of prehistoric, Roman and medieval Europe and the ancient Near East. We have developed an emphasis on practice-based research that has grown from our reflective engagement with non-academic beneficiaries of our research, consisting mainly of the general public, commercial units, museums and heritage policy planners. The UoA's excellence in research, teaching and forensic consultancy was recognised by the award of the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2009.</p> <p>Our research has impact in three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving public understanding of particular aspects of the past; • extending the knowledge base and technical capacity of commercial archaeology, museums, archaeology in developing countries and forensic science; • reducing/preventing the destruction of the archaeological resource and impact on heritage policy. <p>A particular feature of our public engagement is the range of non-specialist audiences. At Silchester and Lydinge a ladder of engagement has developed, ranging from school visits to active participation through work experience placements for A-level students and local community engagement. The department's research on disability and inclusion has had significant impact on professional practice (Creighton & Phillips (2011) <i>Disability and the archaeological profession</i>, www.britarch.ac.uk/accessible, now best practice guidelines).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The UoA has developed robust formal and informal mechanisms to develop and embed impact, and is supported in this endeavour by University-wide structures. Our approach to impact is discussed here in relation to our three main areas of impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving public understanding <p>Our approach integrates impact at the initial stages of project planning, for example through exhibitions that are integral features of research designs (e.g. Glastonbury Abbey Archive Project, 2009-12). The results of the recent Roman Diaspora project (2007-09) feature prominently in the Yorkshire Museum (see Case Study 2). Abroad, the CZAP (Central Zagros Archaeological Project, 2011-14) excavations in Iraqi Kurdistan will become an integral feature of Sulaimaniyah Museum, the only normally functioning museum in Iraq. Interdisciplinary research on Inca ritual platforms (2007-10) resulted in a new display case in the Wellcome Gallery (British Museum) and a travelling display to Peruvian rural communities.</p> <p>We foster close links with local and national societies, not just through symposia and lectures (too numerous to list here) but also through partnerships (e.g. Glastonbury Abbey Trustees; Kent Archaeological Society & Canterbury Archaeological Trust for Lydinge). Many projects (e.g. Lydinge, East Islay Mesolithic Project) run dedicated educational activities aimed at children (also Case Studies 1 and 2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the knowledge base and technical capacity of commercial archaeology, museums, archaeology in developing countries and forensic science <p>The department pursues knowledge transfer activity with commercial units, fostering genuine partnership and dialogue, engaging commercial units in theoretical interpretation and harnessing inaccessible information from thousands of unpublished sites for academic and public discourse. Bradley's Leverhulme-funded survey of prehistoric archaeology in northern Europe (with the University of Leicester, 2008-12) builds on an earlier extensive survey of British 'grey literature'</p>

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that resulted in a new *Prehistory of Britain and Ireland* (2007). Fulford is currently conducting a Leverhulme-funded (£499k, 2012-15) survey of Roman rural settlement in England and Wales (with Cotswold Archaeology and English Heritage). The index of samian potters' stamps published in nine volumes and its associated website, which was produced with the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Germany (<http://www.rgzm.de/samian/home/frames.htm>), acts as an invaluable reference work for all professionals dealing with this ubiquitous pottery (£433k, AHRC, Fulford). All these projects have broken down divisions between academic and commercial archaeology, demonstrating how creative research can be conducted in partnership with field archaeologists.

Our research-based expertise in environmental forensics is acclaimed by client organisations such as The Home Office, UK Police Authorities and the UK Borders Agency. Black's isotopic research on human and material provenancing has informed every major counter-terrorism investigation in the UK over the past five years. We are also enhancing the capacity of commercial archaeology internationally by providing training linked to specific research projects: R. Matthews ran intensive workshops on archaeological databases for Iranian and Iraqi archaeologists (London 2010; Ankara 2012; Sulaimaniyah 2013), and Pluskowski trained Polish, Latvian and Estonian students in environmental sampling (2012). Developing knowledge transfer with international and commercial partners is now an important part of all research planning, supported through the research groups, QUEST and informal sharing of best practice between colleagues (see Section (c) below).

- Reducing/preventing destruction of the archaeological resource & impact on heritage policy

Our **publications** have very significant impact on research agendas in the commercial and public sector; for example, Gilchrist's *Requiem: The Monastic Cemetery in Medieval Britain* (2005) and her role as consultant to Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA) have impacted on the research agenda of recent monastic excavations in London (e.g. St Mary, Clerkenwell: Sloane 2012, p. 1-2). Gilchrist's consultancy on church archaeology contributed to a best practice guide (*Ruined Churches: Problem or Opportunity?*, 2009).

Members of the UoA have made significant contributions to archaeological resource management and heritage policy by **writing major parts of regional archaeological research frameworks** directly linked to their research specialisms (Solent-Thames, South-East, South-West, West Midlands: Astill, Bradley, Fulford, Hosfield, Thomas). The Rural Settlement in Roman Britain project (2012-15) will impact on future practice, e.g. mitigation and sampling strategies. **Members of staff act as consultants or trustees for sites directly linked to their research**, e.g. Astill: Bordesley Abbey; Bell: Silbury Hill, Star Carr; Fulford: Silchester; Gilchrist: Norwich Cathedral, Glastonbury Abbey. The department encourages this practice and experience is shared between colleagues, through the research groups and peer review of grant proposals.

c. Strategy and plans

Our overall research strategy is to address questions of global contemporary relevance such as cultural diversity, identity and material culture, diet and food supply and climate change. All have clear impact implications. Our impact strategy is therefore closely aligned with our research strategy and we are actively enhancing our ability and capacity to execute the former to optimum effect.

Support for impact activities is therefore integral to our strategy, and we **draw on departmental and institutional structures and mechanisms to enhance our understanding and skills**. For example, we ran an internal training day on impact for all Archaeology staff (29/9/2011) and another on "Working with the University Communications Office" (3/10/2010). The former resulted in raised awareness and the implementation of internal peer-review of all grant applications to ensure that impact activities are fully incorporated at the design stage. The latter raised awareness of the importance of media work, and contributed to the very significant **reach** achieved by many projects featuring in national and international publications and TV programmes (e.g. Lyminge: BBC Radio 4 (2012); CZAP: Kurdish satellite TV (2012); Martin Bell: National Geographic (2012), Channel 4 *Time Team Special* (2013), BBC *History of Ancient Britain* (2011); Gilchrist: BBC4 *Medieval Lives* (October 2013).

Building on recent one-day training events (e.g. Forensic Science for Law Enforcement, 2013) and the training experience developed by QUEST, the department will hold annual training workshops

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for forensic and archaeological science, targeted at professionals from the commercial and public sectors. Existing research links are being formalised into Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (e.g. with Natural England, Wildlife Trusts and English Heritage) within the next five years.

We will **continue to actively pursue projects that disseminate research to non-academic audiences**, and in order to incentivise and reward impact-related activities these are now eligible for the internal Research Fund and the University's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP). Impact-related activities are also recognised by the School workload model and University promotion criteria.

We will **continue to build on sustained support and strategic investment by the University**. Earlier examples include the appointment of an outreach officer in 2003 for the research excavation at Silchester (Stewart et al. 2004 'Promoting inclusion at Silchester', *World Archaeology* 36). While pre-dating the REF period, this was a strategic commitment, resulting in outstanding public engagement throughout the REF period and it provides a model for future public engagement at Silchester and elsewhere (see Case Study 1). Similarly, there has been a long-term, strategic investment into Archaeological Science. The appointment of Branch (2008) included significant infrastructure investment into QUEST (Quaternary Scientific), a commercial archaeology unit employing five staff; this has had considerable economic and scientific impact on commercial units and its impact continues to grow (see Case Study 3). A major new initiative will be developed around Fleitmann (appointed 2012) and the Reading Centre for Past Climate Change, research that has important implications for contemporary environmental concerns and huge impact potential. This new centre (2013-) was supported by strategic University investment (Academic Investment Posts and dedicated space and laboratories), involves close collaboration with the University's world-leading Department of Meteorology, and will offer a specialist MSc (Past Climate Change and Ecodynamics).

The UoA will **continue to embed impact at the design stage of all grant applications**, which are now routinely reviewed internally by Research Group Leaders. Using the Roman Diasporas and Glastonbury projects as models we will continue to increase public engagement and extend the range of interpretative practices for current and future projects. This includes the conscious development of links with education professionals, for example through working with educational charities and consultants such as the Runnymede Trust (Eckardt: Diasporas) and 'Jakaranda Tree' (Thomas: Lyminge).

We will **build on our tradition of sharing experience and practice across the department**. For example, the School web manager has an explicit remit to disseminate best practice from especially successful project websites (such as Silchester, Ecology of Crusading and Inca platforms) to support the development of appropriate resources for other projects.

More **training on impact pathways** is planned for 2013-14 for all academic staff and PhD students (as part of the regular Research Forum meetings). The department is also taking forward a workshop on social media such as Facebook, to engage with diverse audiences and to develop a reflexive dialogue about our research. This will build on the work of the Glastonbury and Diaspora projects, which emphasised multi-vocality and diversity. This strategic training will result in at least 80% of staff receiving appropriate impact and media training in the next five years.

d. Relationship to case studies

The examples above and the three case studies demonstrate the exceptional impact of Reading's interdisciplinary blend of social and scientific archaeology. Our research has impacted on heritage policy and commercial archaeology, and through collaborative, practice-based research we continue to capture new data sets. Our case studies exemplify the diverse impacts of our interdisciplinary and innovative research: Case Studies 1 (Silchester) and 2 (Diaspora) focus in particular on improving public understanding while Case Study 3 (Geoarchaeology & Enterprise) is concerned with capacity building in commercial archaeology and with reducing damage to the archaeological resource through heritage policy. All three case studies emerge from our shared research ethos and are used to disseminate best practice in promoting impact through mentoring and training procedures.