

<b>Institution:</b> Cardiff University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> History (28)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Rediscovering Heritage in Caerau and Ely: Increased cultural participation, community value, and life opportunities through the CAER Project		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr David Wyatt	Reader	24/11/2003-present
Dr Oliver Davis	Senior Lecturer and CAER Heritage Project Co-director	26/02/2013-present
Prof Niall Sharples	Professor	01/08/1995-present
Dr Stephanie Ward	Senior Lecturer	01/09/2009-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 01/08/2013-31/12/2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>The Caerau And Ely Rediscovering Heritage Project (CAER), co-founded by the Cardiff research team, works with disadvantaged Cardiff communities who face significant social and economic challenges. The project has involved over 4,019 people in knowledge co-production and excavation around Caerau Hillfort, with local people co-creating new interpretations of the 6,000 year old story of their communities. Through partnership with Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), the Cardiff team's research-led engagement and co-production strategies have changed attitudes to heritage and cultural participation. This led to improved social networks and life opportunities, developed positive community narratives, and transformed educational opportunities. It also significantly expanded ACE's staffing capacity and resources to support the community.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>Caerau and Ely – Wales' largest housing estates – are home to more than 25,000 people. The area has been in the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation's top 50 most deprived areas since 2005 when the index began, and is currently one of Wales' top 10 most deprived areas for employment (15% unemployment compared to UK average of 3.8%), education (7% of school leavers go on to higher education compared to UK average of 34%), health, income, and community safety.</p> <p>Caerau Hillfort, situated within these estates, is one of the largest but most poorly understood heritage sites in South Wales [3.1]. A Cardiff interdisciplinary team of archaeologists and historians showed that Iron Age hillforts in Wales have been academically neglected, with attention focussed on key regions such as southern England [3.1, 3.2], a regional bias which distorts understanding of Iron Age Britain. In the case of Caerau, the marginalised nature of its surrounding communities had additionally deterred research. Cardiff work highlighted the complex histories around identities and stigmatisation of poor and marginalised communities like Caerau [3.3, 3.4].</p> <p>To address these points, in 2011, the Cardiff team set up the CAER Heritage project with community organisation ACE (Action in Caerau and Ely) to utilise Cardiff's rich but untapped heritage assets to i) fill vital historical knowledge gaps and ii) create educational and life opportunities for the local community [3.1]. The team worked with local participants to develop community-focused archaeological digs, historical co-research, and heritage and cultural activities. Over eight years, CAER secured over £532K in 15 externally funded research grants [G3.1-3.5] as well as £1.3M in infrastructural National Lottery Heritage Fund investments.</p> <p>CAER developed community-focused research strategies [3.1], by actively involving local participants in the co-production of research through a range of activities. These included community consultation and involvement in funding bids, the establishment of community-based adult learners courses, and outreach opportunities for university students to work alongside community participants. The research created a new community of practice with participatory</p>		

evaluation embedded in all activities and equal value placed on the contributions of all partners, whether local volunteers or trained professionals [3.1]. Community participants remained engaged over long periods during the research process. For example, they were involved in all aspects of the archaeological process including project planning, geophysical surveys, large open-area excavations, and post-excavation analysis [3.1, 3.3].

This methodology has been applied through a number of activities, including community archaeological excavations on the hillfort and heritage trails [G3.5]. This led to findings which have altered understanding of the site itself, and the social and economic life of its past inhabitants [3.5]. It demonstrated, for example, an exceptionally long history of monument construction on the hill. Community excavations at the hillfort identified the remains of an underlying Neolithic enclosure (only the third ever found in Wales), followed by multiple phases of hillfort construction in the Iron Age, with subsequent Romano British and Medieval activity [3.5, 3.6]. Work on transforming perceptions of the significance of hillforts overturned the traditional interpretation of hillforts as elite residences, arguing instead that they are communal projects whose construction brought people together from small, widely dispersed settlements and restructured allegiances and power relationships in the region [3.2, 3.5].

The research team's multidisciplinary approach, utilising insights from social sciences [3.1], instigated an important research dimension arising directly from the need to reflexively evaluate the project's social mission. This strand informs, develops and critically reflects on CAER's co-production strategies in relation to heritage regeneration and community cohesion. Findings about the project methodology in the community included [3.1, 3.3]:

- the active excavation of artefacts and greater value placed on community heritage gives participants a strong sense of ownerships towards the project and the place;
- the shared creation of nationally significant heritage fostered the emergence of positive community narratives and improved attitudes towards heritage and community cohesion.

The co-produced historical and archaeological research, including four community excavations at Caerau Hillfort and one in Ely, revealed new findings about the important role of the hillfort to past communities in South Wales. The research also contextualised the hillfort in its wider geographical, social and historical landscape over time, including exploration of the modern history of the social housing estate [3.4, G3.3, G3.5]. The activities undertaken through the CAER Heritage project have continued this thread to the present day and led to an increased sense of community and connection with the past. The project has been cited as a best practice model, including in the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales' 2018 Innovation Nation Civic Mission Policy Report, on the AHRC website, and in the RCUK Inspiration to Engage Concordat 2015.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[3.1] Wyatt, D., Davis, O. and Ancarno, C. 2015. Forging Communities: the CAER Heritage Project and the dynamics of co-production. In: D. O'Brien and P. Mathews (eds.) *After Urban Regeneration*. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 113-130. Available from HEI on request.

[3.2] Sharples, N. 2010. *Social relations in Later Prehistory: Wessex in the first millennium BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available from HEI on request.

[3.3] Vergunst, J., Curtis, E., Davis, O., Johnston, R., Graham, H. and Shepard, C. 2017. Material legacies: Shaping things and places in collaborative heritage research. In: K. Facer and K. Pahl (eds.) *Researching in public: Contested origins, live debates and emerging legacies for collaborative research*. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 153-72. Oliver Davis (Cardiff University) wrote a subsection in this article on the CAER Heritage project and findings relating to material legacies. Available from HEI on request.

[3.4] Ward, S. 2013. *Unemployment and the State in Britain: The Means Test and Protest in 1930s south Wales and north-east England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Available from HEI on request.

[3.5] Davis, O. and Sharples, N. 2020. Excavations at Caerau hillfort, Cardiff: towards a narrative for the hillforts of south-east Wales. In: D. Delfino, F. Coimbra, G. Cruz, and D. Cardoso (eds.) *Late Prehistoric Fortifications in Europe: Defensive, symbolic and territorial aspects from the Chalcolithic to the Iron Age*. Proceeding of 'Fort Metal Ages', International Colloquium, Guimarães, Portugal. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 163-181. Available from HEI on request.

[3.6] Davis, O. and Sharples, N. 2017. Early Neolithic Enclosures in Wales: A review of the evidence in light of recent discoveries at Caerau, Cardiff. *Antiquaries Journal* 97, pp. 1-26. DOI:10.1017/S0003581517000282

**Selected grants (out of 15 grants totalling £532,000):**

[G3.1] Wyatt D. (PI), Caerau and Ely Rediscovering Heritage Project (CAER Heritage Project) (£19,934), 14/02/2012-13/12/2012, Arts and Humanities Research Council, AH/J013625/1

[G3.2] Wyatt D. (PI), Sharples, N., Davis, O. Digging Caerau Project (£71,779) 01/02/2013-28/02/2014, Arts and Humanities Research Council, AH/K007726/1

[G3.3] Wyatt D. (PI), Moles K., Ward S. Heritage and Art Trails of Cardiff Project (HEART of Cardiff Project) (£25,238) 01/02/2013-28/02/2014, Arts and Humanities Research Council, AH/K007629/1

[G3.4] Wyatt D. (PI), Davis O., Sharples N. Digging Communities – Past, Present, Future (£51,352), 2014, AHRC Connected Communities

[G3.5] Wyatt D. (PI), Ward S. The Dusty's WW1 Project (£12,000), 01/06/2016-31/03/2017, Arts and Humanities Research Council.

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

The CAER Heritage Project's research-led engagement with Caerau and Ely communities – since August 2013 – involved 697 local participants [5.1a, p.51], 15 non-Higher Education partners, and attracted 4,019 visitors to events and excavations [5.2]. This increased cultural participation with marginalised communities, developed positive narratives about the community, improved educational inclusion, and *"brought the work of higher education, and the possibilities it opens up, directly into the lives of young people and families who, otherwise, would never have seen these opportunities as belonging to them"* [5.3 – Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales].

**4.1 Changing attitudes to heritage and cultural participation**

*"[CAER] has turned a vague sense of local history and its importance into a very real, tangible and constructive thing"* [5.2 - Dave Horton, Development Manager, ACE].

Through CAER activities, Cardiff research *"hugely increased community engagement, particularly amongst groups...traditionally hard to reach"* [5.2]. These groups include school pupils, sixth formers, young people excluded from education, long-term unemployed people, people with physical and mental health issues, retired people, and working parents [5.1a, p.51]. A survey of the 2,062 visitors to the hillfort or associated roadshows in 2015 showed that [5.1a, p.51]:

- 95% said visiting the Caerau excavations had increased their interest in archaeology;
- 100% said that it had helped them to better understand the importance of Caerau Hillfort;
- 95% said that it had changed their attitude towards their community's heritage.

Local people describe how working with CAER has helped them *"to find out more about the history of where I live"* and that as a result of the project *"a lot of people realize now what they've got on their doorstep"* [5.4a]. Participants feel valued, with one stating: *"everyone recognises that the project could not have happened without local people. That is a great feeling to be part of something this significant"* [5.5]. CAER excavations at the Hillfort in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 put *"local residents at the centre of efforts to uncover the prehistoric origins of Cardiff"* [5.6a, ITV Wales]. They were also noted as an example of best practice for engagement and *"community cohesion"* in the Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament) [5.6b].

Between 2017-19, 189 local people were involved in co-developing the successful £2.1M bid for Hidden Hillfort, an ambitious community regeneration project to transform the site into a heritage attraction. The project, run by CAER and seven non-Higher Education partners, received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (£1.3M), the Wellcome Trust/BBC Children in Need (£120K), Wales and West Housing Association (£70K), Moondance Foundation (£220K), First Campus (£12K) and Cardiff University (£422K to include embedding a five year academic project director at ACE) [5.2]. Three years of community-led excavation and surveys (2019-2022) will develop a new infrastructure, including a state-of-the-art heritage centre, which will act as a gateway to the Hillfort, a hub for community co-produced explorations, and a multi-use space for community groups. Richard Bellamy, Director for Wales of the National Lottery Heritage Fund,

said the project *“shows clearly how local heritage can be a catalyst for lots of different activities and bring people together behind a common purpose”* and that providing skills training to the community enabled *“people to enjoy the history on their own doorstep”* [5.7].

#### 4.2 Growth and development of community organisation ACE

ACE's nine-year partnership with CAER *“brought a new dimension to the work which ACE leads”* [5.3 Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales]. For example, the organisation benefited from professional development opportunities, engagement networks, and new partnerships. CAER's successful grant capture *“facilitated significant extra capacity for ACE”* by enabling professional and/or academic staff to be embedded within the organisation's community development work [5.2]. This led to the expansion of ACE, with the employment of three staff members. The heritage centre developed through the Hidden Hillfort project also provides ACE with a *“vital”* new resource *“to provide new activities and services for local people and opportunities for local people to develop their own action”* [5.2]. Describing CAER as *“one of the most successful and significant projects”* run by ACE, Horton confirmed that collaboration with the Cardiff team *“changed our working practices by giving a much broader sense of what you can do and what is possible”* [5.2].

#### 4.3 Improving the community narrative

*“We have taken ownership of our own locality and heritage...The project has won two major community archaeology awards, projecting us onto a national stage”* [5.4b – Helen, community volunteer, 2017].

Prior to the project, the community was often discussed negatively on a national stage as one of the UK's most deprived areas. As Horton described it: *“our neighbourhoods have come to be seen as ‘problems that need solving’ rather than as places with significant skills, knowledge and resources that have been neglected and ignored”* [5.2]. CAER brought positive attention to the area and developed an alternative narrative that recognises its strengths. It provided *“an opportunity for local people to understand the unique value of their community, enabling them to challenge stigma and to explore the kind of future they want for their neighbourhood”* [5.2]. One local volunteer who returned to excavate in multiple seasons noted that *“as an area we're pushed to the back a lot and have been for years...now we're at the forefront for something...which is pretty amazing”* [5.1b, p.80].

The CAER website has over 85,387 views to date, with 15,215 from overseas (including Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Oceania, mainland Europe and the Middle East) [5.2]. National recognition includes i) winning the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's Engage Competition 2014 and ii) the Times Higher Education (THE) 'Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community' Award in 2017 [5.8a]. The THE panel described the co-production approach as a means of *“addressing contemporary issues of social exclusion and educational needs, promoting skills development and challenging negative perceptions of these communities”* [5.8a].

CAER's role in changing the community narrative and upskilling individuals also brought personal benefits to residents. Horton stated that CAER is an opportunity *“to tell a different story about our community, whilst still making a contribution to tackling poverty by building skills and educational opportunities for people of all ages”* [5.2]. Volunteers emphasise improvements to their wellbeing, for example: *“I suffer quite a bit from depression, so it's given me drive to get out of the house, get involved, become part of a team...which I'm really grateful for”* [5.1b, p.81] and that the project *“is a good way of bringing people together in the community”* [5.4a]. Cameraman Vivian Thomas, who began as a volunteer and has since worked on a range of projects including CAER Studio, stated: *“I cannot speak of the project without becoming quivering-lip emotional. Every day I look forward to the next dig and the next project to help tell the story of the history and heritage of Ely and Caerau...I've been able to experience for myself, and record for others how the project has helped increase wellbeing. For example, whilst digging people can forget the stresses of everyday life or step away from their difficulties for a time”* [5.5].

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the community hit particularly hard by redundancy, food poverty, bereavement and social isolation. The CAER team collaborated with ACE to deliver Heritage Food Parcels on a bi-weekly basis to 25 homes (66 individuals) [5.8b]. 39 households (totalling 131 individuals) and 2 schools (around 60 pupils) also took part in 'CAER Big Dig', a back garden test-

pit archaeology project to explore the heritage of social housing [5.8b]. The project recorded 1,710 volunteer hours, with 100% of participants feeling more engaged with local heritage and that the activity relieved some of social isolation of lockdown. 85% also agreed that participation had made them feel more positive about their situation [5.8b]. This *“has given something positive to the area during a very difficult time and shows us that we had not been forgotten”* [5.5].

#### 4.4 Transforming educational opportunities

CAER has broken down barriers to learning and educational progression for children and adults. Vivian Thomas said: *“I have not had the opportunity to go to university. The project has given me, and the other volunteers, access to university lecturers, new information, and the experiences that we probably would not have otherwise had”* [5.5]. For example, the project has:

- delivered 7 free accredited adult learners' courses within community contexts to 89 local adult learners (including unemployed and retired people) [5.2];
- involved 2,169 local pupils (Years 5-12) from 7 local schools [5.2], including Cardiff West Community High (CWCH) where 90% of pupils live in the lower socio-economic deprivation indicator quintile [5.9a].

Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales, noted that through the *“remarkable”* work going on at the site, and by taking university research to the area, the project *“open[ed] opportunities for young people that have hitherto been very scantily available to them”* [5.3].

CAER worked with CWCH to develop curriculum-based research activities at key stage 3, GCSE and A level, alongside a dedicated state-of-the-art CAER teaching room within the school. During COVID-19, CAER worked with the school to offer a virtual heritage project across all year groups [5.9a]. Headteacher Dr Martin Hulland confirmed: *“CAER Heritage’s initiatives in terms of long term partnership building and sustained annual interventions are essential for our students. We estimate that over 500 pupils have engaged with the project. These are the kinds of experiences which change lives, raise aspirations and promote lifelong learning”* [5.9a].

Two CWCH sixth-form pupils and three adult learners progressed to Cardiff University through direct involvement with CAER [5.2, 5.9a]. Former pupil Alanah Evans completed a degree in Archaeology and Ancient History after volunteering with CAER [5.9a]. She noted: *“[CAER] has allowed me to discover the history within my area and let me share this knowledge with others”* [5.10]. CAER has secured 8 scholarships for adult learners to progress to university (to be awarded 2019-2023 by Cardiff University), and 4 university scholarships for local pupils (the first was awarded in 2020) [5.9b], which Hulland described as a *“life changing opportunity”* [5.9a].

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

[5.1] a. Davis, O. and Sharples, N. 2016. *Excavations at Caerau Hillfort, Cardiff, South Wales, 2015: An interim report*. Cardiff Studies in Archaeology 36. Cardiff: School of History Archaeology and Religion. b. Davis, O. and Sharples, N. 2015. *Excavations at Caerau hillfort, Cardiff, South Wales, 2014: An interim report*. Cardiff Studies in Archaeology 35. Cardiff: School of History Archaeology and Religion.

[5.2] Testimonial: Dave Horton, Operations Manager, Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE)

[5.3] Statements from Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales

[5.4] Community testimonials a. ‘Community: CAER Heritage Community Film Project’ video (July 2014) b. ‘Helen’s CAER journey’ blog (June 2017).

[5.5] Testimonial: Vivian Thomas, local participant and cameraman

[5.6] Examples of media reports and references to CAER a. ITV Wales ‘Third excavation at Pre-historic Fort in Cardiff’ (22 June 2015), b. Eluned Parrot MS (Senedd debate, 21 January 2014)

[5.7] Statement from Head of National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales Richard Bellamy

[5.8] a. UK Awards Won (Times Higher Education 2017, NCCPE 2014) b. Application for Marsh Awards for Community Archaeology 2020, which the team went on to win

[5.9] a. Testimonial: Martin Hulland, Head Teacher of Cardiff West Community High School b. ‘New learning opportunities for CAER Heritage’, Cardiff University News, (4 September 2018)

[5.10] Testimonial: Alanah Evans, former Cardiff West Community High pupil