

Institution: Staffordshire University		
Unit of Assessment: 15 Archaeology		
Title of case study: SEARCHING FOR SHAKESPEARE – impact of archaeology on local, regional and global communities		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: August 2013 to present		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Names: Kevin Colls William Mitchell	Roles: Associate Professor of Archaeology Lecturer in Archaeology	Period employed by HEI: 2013 to present 2015, 2016 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013 to 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		

1. Summary of the impact

This case study documents the impact of pioneering archaeological projects investigating the life and death of William Shakespeare. At the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT), impacts include: **1)** The re-imagining of New Place, Shakespeare's family home, involving a GBP6,000,000 site transformation and the installation of a new permanent exhibition in 2016-2017; **2)** 181% increase in visitors to New Place in the period 2015/16 - 2016/17, leading to a GBP777,475 revenue increase; **3)** 16% increase in volunteer hours (between 2014 and 2015), with a cash value equivalent of GBP299,500; **4)** 10,481 children and their families undertook archaeology-inspired learning activities and SBT developed a new Key Stage 2 workshop; **5)** SBT have invested in a further 12 archaeological projects; **6)** Creation of 31 new jobs for the region and an increase of GBP1,320,000 towards regional GVA; and **7)** A reconstruction of New Place based on our archaeological findings forms part of a GBP112,000,000 project to create a new international heritage and cultural centre in Southern China. At Holy Trinity Church, we used a novel, non-invasive method to identify and characterise Shakespeare's grave, providing new information to 220,000 people as visitors annually.

2. Underpinning research

William Shakespeare is a uniquely important and influential writer. However, very little is known about the man himself, his family, and his way of life. Apart from his works, few documentary sources provide evidence of his lifestyle. Much of his early life in Stratford-upon-Avon remains unknown to scholarship. So, too, his later life there after he returned from London. We have used new archaeological methods to pursue this important information. Since 2013, researchers from the Centre of Archaeology have been at the forefront of research into the archaeology of Shakespeare through the 'Searching for Shakespeare' project. The key research aim of the project was to use cutting-edge archaeological and forensic methodologies to increase our understanding of Shakespeare's domestic life; his social status; his death and burial; and the burial of his immediate family.

Our work at New Place expanded on the 'Dig for Shakespeare' project, an initial pilot project that Colls and Mitchell led between 2010 to 2012. This earlier work honed the community archaeological approach and prepared partnership and funding foundations for the main research. We designed the main research to achieve impact beyond academia, especially professional and educational impact (practice and methods) and public impact (community values, participation, and tourism). This design influenced our selection of sites for investigation in Stratford-upon-Avon. We investigated New Place, Shakespeare's long-since demolished family home, and other properties associated with the Shakespeare family. We also investigated Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare and members of his immediate family are buried. These sites have been the subject of debate, controversy, and mystery for centuries. None of them has been investigated with modern archaeological techniques.

Funded by SBT, an independent charity that cares for Shakespeare heritage sites and collections in Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Heritage Lottery Fund (totalling GBP560,000), we conducted an archaeological investigation at New Place. The project led to the search and subsequent excavation of this important residence. It identified, for the first time, structural remains that established the property's form and function [3.1]. This evidence included the remains of a Great Hall, courtyard, brewhouse, kitchens, servants' quarters, cellars, and living spaces. The work

recovered extensive evidence of Shakespeare and his family's personal possessions, social status, diet, trade, cottage industries, and leisure activities. These findings revolutionise what we understand about his day-to-day life [3.1 and 3.2]. By adopting participatory approaches involving community volunteers, we produced primary research on the value and management of public archaeology within the framework of the Heritage Lottery Fund [3.3] and set benchmarks for future projects.

Due to our New Place work, Holy Trinity Church approached us in 2014 to undertake the first archaeological research at Shakespeare's gravesite. This research was funded by Channel 4 (totalling GBP27,420), Staffordshire University, and the University of Birmingham. It received in-kind support from English Heritage (Historic England), national and regional church authorities, local church committees, and international scholars. We completed a novel, non-invasive survey by using bespoke multi-frequency Ground Penetrating Radar equipment to investigate the Shakespeare family graves. We corrected the prior scholarly understanding by showing that a very shallow earth cut grave exists under the tombstone and that Shakespeare was not buried in a coffin, but in a simple shroud [3.4]. The work also concluded that the grave has been disturbed in the past and that it is likely that his skull had been removed from the grave [3.5]. After two further years' research, the team were granted permission in 2016 to access a crypt at St Leonard's Church in Beoley thought to contain Shakespeare's skull. After non-invasive forensic investigation, we used laser-scans to model the skull and then complete an anthropological assessment and facial reconstruction of the individual. We found that the skull belonged to a female aged over seventy when she died. This project received interest from scholars and members of the public across the world and formed the subject of a major TV documentary [3.6]. Overall, as a project portfolio, these publications demonstrate advances in non-invasive geophysical survey, Shakespearean studies, medieval and post-medieval archaeology, public archaeology, and archaeology and the media.

3. References to the research

Referenced below is the main book published through Manchester University Press (fully reviewed by leading experts), three peer-reviewed Q1 journal articles, one published piece in *Current Archaeology*, and one documentary aired by Channel 4 as part of their *Secret Histories* series.

3.1 Edmondson, Paul, COLLS, Kevin, and MITCHELL, William (2016) *Finding Shakespeare's New Place: An archaeological biography*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK. ISBN 978 1 5261 0649 0. <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/2725>

3.2 MITCHELL, William (2018) William Shakespeare's New Place: investing in, or inheriting a legacy? *Post Medieval Archaeology*. Vol 53, pp. 66-87. <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/4910>

3.3 MITCHELL, William and COLLS, Kevin (2019) An evaluation of community-led archaeology projects funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund: Two Case Studies. *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage*. Vol 1, pp. 17-34. <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5815>

3.4 Utsi, Erica, and COLLS, Kevin (2017) The GPR investigation of the Shakespeare family graves. *Archaeological Prospection*, Vol 24, pp. 335-352. <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5882>

3.5 COLLS, Kevin (2017) The Secrets of Shakespeare's Grave. *Current Archaeology*, 325. pp. 36-39. <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/4201>

3.6 COLLS, Kevin, Arrow Media (2016), *Secret Histories: Shakespeare's Tomb* [Video] London and Channel 4. <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/2876>

4. Details of the impact

Impact at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

The Challenge: SBT explains the research's importance to their work: '*The site of New Place, one of the Shakespearean properties that we curate, was always difficult to communicate to our visitors primarily since the house is no longer present. The New Place reimagining project was an ambitious attempt to reinvigorate this important site, develop new external and internal exhibitions, find new information, encourage tourism, create unique visitor experiences, and enhance our educational offering.*' [5.1 p.3]. SBT also wanted to reduce their dependency on Shakespeare's Birthplace, diversify their portfolio, and solve the challenge of attracting local visitors to their sites.

The Project: Our archaeological findings [3.1] drove the re-telling of the New Place story through a GBP6,000,000 site transformation and the installation of a new permanent exhibition in 2016-2017. The site has become an award-winning heritage landmark that celebrates Shakespeare and his legacy (Selwyn Goldsmith Award for Universal Design 2018 at the Civic Trust Awards). The architects describe our influence on their work: *'We took our inspiration from our imagination which was stimulated by the reality of the archaeological finds...they had a profound impact on our ideas and how they were eventually realised'* [5.2]. The design allowed visitors (334,464 people between 2017 and 2019; SBT visitor figures) to connect with Shakespeare through relatable themes such as *'eating, wearing [clothes] and the material culture of everyday life... enabled people to realise the size of New Place and significance in Shakespeare's life'* [5.1 p.3].

The Impacts: Tourism and economy - The New Place archaeology project and subsequent site transformation impacted on tourism and incomes for SBT and the wider Stratford-upon-Avon community. After the site's transformation and reopening in August 2016, visitor numbers for 2016 rose to 126,603 people. This was a record for the site and a 181% increase over the 44,979 people who visited in 2015. Visitor numbers remained well above pre-transformation figures in 2017-2018 (96,797 people) and 2018-2019 (111,061 people). Overall, income from ticket sales across all SBT tourist sites saw a revenue increase from GBP2,613,087 in 2015 to GBP3,390,562 after the New Place transformation. New Place accounted for 8% of visitors to SBT sites in 2015. This increased to 23% in 2016/17, 18% in 2017/18, and 20% in 2018/19. This increase now sees New Place as the second most-visited SBT site behind Shakespeare's Birthplace. In addition, between 2016-2019, a total of 3,581 people made repeat visits to New Place, a 28% increase from the period 2011-2015. This total includes 1,008 people who visited over 6 times [5.1 p.4]. An economic assessment analysis was undertaken by Amion Consulting to assess the impact of the New Place project on the wider region [5.3]. The analysis focused on increased visitor numbers, supply chain data, and employment figures. It concluded that the project a) created 31 FTE new jobs in the area and b) provided a regional GVA (Gross Value Added) increase of GBP1,320,000 [5.3 p.13].

Over 3,000 local households claimed free access to New Place in 2016. SBT attribute this peak in numbers to the newly designed site reinvigorating local interest in their work [5.1 p.2]. The project led to SBT reviewing and expanding their accessibility policies at New Place and their other properties: *'The project was a catalyst to SBT reviewing and improving inclusive access. New Place is now fully accessible and the more progressive ideas with regards to people with disabilities have been piloted and put in place at New Place and then are being rolled out elsewhere, so it has led the way for the SBT on the whole of its access provision.'* [5.1 pp. 4-5].

Community Participation – SBT describe the project as *'a catalyst for volunteer recruitment, which had previously been ticking along at a low level... The archaeology intrigued people and they came from much further afield than usual'* [5.1 p.1]. Between August 2013 and December 2020 over 275 people volunteered to help with the project. Volunteer tasks included fieldwork, finds process, lab-based research, archive research, and dissemination tasks [5.4 p.1]. Through community engagement and public events during the New Place archaeology project, the SBT noted 29,000 voluntary hours were donated annually in 2014 and 2015, a 16% increase in volunteer hours on 2013 [5.1 p.2]. These donations had a cash value equivalent of GBP299,500 (calculated from SBT salary grade for Assistants). Summarised in publication [3.3], new interactions and connections were formed between the guides and volunteers of all age demographics [5.4 p.3]. As noted by an SBT Guide *'the close sense of collegiality amongst the guides at New Place was cemented by the archaeology project and the activities happening around it, and certainly contributes to the wellbeing of the team. They were colleagues who became friends through this shared experience.'* [5.1 p.2]. As stated by the Head of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, *'one of the big problems, certainly in Warwickshire, is rural isolation'*, which makes projects like this beneficial [5.5]. The New Place work provided a clear example of how these projects can mitigate against isolation issues with 65% of volunteers continuing to participate on other archaeology projects [5.4 p.9]. 4 volunteers went on to study archaeology at university, 1 volunteer retrained to work for a leading geophysical company, and a further volunteer formed his own archaeological company and is now completing research projects totalling GBP35,000 to date [5.6]. For SBT *'the project kick-started a different way of working with volunteers and recruiting them. It was a whole new process of opening-up, doing things more*

transparently and involving people in the whole process not just the end result. Through the project funding we created the role of Community Engagement and Volunteer Officer which remains in place.' [5.1 p.4].

Schools' Educational Programme and Visitor Talks – The project generated resources to improve educational provision at New Place, introducing a new focus on archaeology: *'Despite the Trust being a custodian of an extensive local archaeological collection for many years, prior to the New Place Project, archaeology did not play a part of our educational offering. The archaeology has increased the collections hugely and there is now a greater resource to draw on for these uses'* [5.7]. 10,481 people, including children and their families, used our resources between August 2013 and 2015. In 2015 SBT introduced a new workshop into their Key Stage 2 primary school curriculum. This workshop, 'A Time and Place', teaches children to use archaeological techniques to examine primary evidence and interpret the past [5.1 p.4, and 5.7]. *'We refer to the specific findings about New Place in several of our education workshops. Having this understanding about the site has offered an extra dimension to our presentation and activities'* [5.7]. With this new offering, SBT increased the learning objectives of its core teaching to include an enhanced understanding of chronological sequences, awareness of environmental legacies, importance of conservation, development of source-based enquiry, and increased communication skills. *'This day was packed full of kinaesthetic learning experiences most suitable for Year 6. The class were brimming with enthusiasm because they became active archaeologists. Much to see, do make and visit. What a wonderful way to bring Shakespeare to life'* - teacher testimonial (2016) [5.7]. SBT used our research to revamp the New Place visitor experience through talks and information boards: *'Our interpretive talks to the visitors incorporated knowledge gleaned from the first phase of the dig to explain what we knew of New Place. The knowledge accumulated from the rolling archaeological dig is now a fundamental part of the story we deliver to our visitors, every single day, every half hour via fifteen-minute illustrated talks'* [5.7].

Professional Practice - Due to the success of New Place, SBT now sees archaeology as *'an essential part of any intervention of the buildings that we would carry out, and we undertake as many archaeological investigations as we can.'* Since 2015, SBT has funded a further 12 archaeological projects at four of its other culturally important sites (Shakespeare's Birthplace, Mary Arden's Farm, Ann Hathaway's Cottage, and Nash House). These projects produced results to inform conservation and development strategies, develop volunteer drives, and provide education materials [5.1 p.4].

We have influenced professionals by contributing to new best practice for combined archaeology-architecture project management. During the 'Searching for Shakespeare' project, a project advisory board met once a month, connecting industry professionals in facial reconstruction, building conservation, architecture, art and design, health and safety, and education with experts in forensic archaeology, archival studies, Shakespeare studies, and English studies. This group monitored the project and advised on professional practice, advancing methodological approaches, and research opportunities. This New Place project approach has been viewed as setting new standards and rigour for complex, interdisciplinary investigations as evidenced by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, the architect for the New Place Transformation. This award-winning architectural company has since used our methodology in 4 landmark heritage projects, including the Archway Roman Bath Project at the World Heritage Centre in Bath [5.2].

The New Place development led to the commissioning of major new art installations. These include 'His Mind's Eye', a 20m tall bronze sculpture of a windblown tree in a raised golden garden at New Place, and 'The White Model', a large stylised 3D representation of New Place constructed in backlit opalescent Corian [5.1 p.3]. The latter was created by an artist and period interpreter who joined the archaeology project as a volunteer in late 2013 and gained an interest in combining art and archaeology. He stated *'this project has provided me with an exciting new direction to my career utilising my illustrative skills, historical interest and collaborative skills networking with a team of experts in archaeology, timber framed buildings, interior and lifestyle. My research into the architectural and lifestyle aspects has resulted in that I am now viewed as an on-site point of reference for all things structural to my colleagues and peers'* [5.8].

Impact of the Shakespeare's Tomb Project, Holy Trinity Church

Given the importance of the site and the ethical and religious beliefs which must be considered, no previous archaeological investigation had taken place, despite many requests from a host of individual researchers and institutions. Perhaps partly due to this refusal, and the overwhelming global interest in Shakespeare, many myths, legends, and stories have long since arisen regarding his final resting place. Our non-invasive practice of multi-frequency Ground Penetrating Radar data collection [3.4] was the key to gaining permission. Our investigation led to the design and installation of new information boards at the church (250,000 people visit annually). It generated a series of public presentations, which church officials praised highly because *'it was pleasing to see that there was a significant number of people at these events who were not from the normal congregation'* [5.9]. The results were presented at the International Society for Archaeological Prospection, the leading geophysical symposium for professional practice.

International Impact

Our archaeological work resulted in New Place being included in an ambitious development project in Southern China [5.1 p.3]. Located near Fuzhou, the reconstruction is part of a GBP112,000,000 project to create a new international heritage and cultural centre that will promote tourism by paying tribute to three literary figures. It involves building a new 220-acre town called San Weng, which translates as 'three masters', to celebrate Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, and Tang Xianzu. As stated by SBT, *'They have been trying to make sure what they are doing is authentic and so they approached us to work in partnership with them. The information from the archaeological project at New Place is essential in helping them to achieve this'* [5.1 p.3]. In a 2019 press release, the Chairman of SBT states that: *'By providing our knowledge and expertise we will be able to support our work to not only maintain and preserve the world's greatest Shakespeare heritage sites and collections here in the UK, but to also continue to promote the enjoyment of Shakespeare's works, life and times around the globe'*.

This global attraction of Shakespeare, the participatory nature of the methodologies, and the links to tourism have generated worldwide interest. Two freely available digital exhibitions were launched online. These are Shakespeare Connected by SBT and the Centre of Archaeology (2018) and 'Searching for Shakespeare' by the Centre of Archaeology (2020). Between Oct and Dec 2020, 7,183 unique visitors accessed these websites with 21,445 individual page views [5.10 p.7]. Four major TV documentaries (BBC, Channel 4, and the Discovery Channel) have followed aspects of this work. These documentaries have aired in a minimum of 43 countries across the world. At least 12,300,000 people as viewers have accessed this new information in the UK alone [5.10 p.2, and 3.6]. Through its media presence, this project has reached a global audience, including 23 countries where archaeology has limited exposure. Media include popular magazines [3.5], newspaper articles, TV interviews, radio interviews, TV documentaries, online reports, blogs, and social media. Countries include (but are not limited to) the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, India, Malaysia, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia, Canada, Armenia, Belarus, United States of America, Argentina, Bahrain, Nepal, Qatar, Pakistan, and Japan [5.10 p.5].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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- 5.1: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust testimonial including data and statistics from key individuals
 - 5.2: New Place transformation project design testimony comprising of statements from Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (architect), and Expedition Engineering (designer and engineering).
 - 5.3: Economic Assessment report on New Place Project by Amion Consulting.
 - 5.4: Volunteer summary report and key testimonials from key Shakespeare Project volunteers.
 - 5.5: Statement from the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - 5.6: Statement from former volunteer and current research archaeologist.
 - 5.7: Testimony from Primary Education Department at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.
 - 5.8: Testimony from graphic designer and volunteer.
 - 5.9: Testimony from Holy Trinity Church, Stratford Upon Avon.
 - 5.10: Media report for 'Searching for Shakespeare' project including TV documentaries, radio, printed media, online media.