

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU)		
Unit of Assessment: 28 – History		
Title of case study: Historic medieval settlement landscapes: community history and archaeology, and cultural heritage preservation.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Duncan Wright	Programme Leader and Senior Lecturer, Archaeology and Heritage	01/09/2015 to 31/08/2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/09/15 – 31/07/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Impact was achieved through interrelated history, archaeology, and heritage project activities exploring historic settlements of the medieval period (c.400-1500AD). Public impact was reflected in the domain of 'creativity, culture, and society', through collaborations with the heritage sector that resulted in enhancements to heritage preservation and interpretation, and exhibitions. Activities secured 'impacts on the environment', by influencing professional practice, and informing environmental policy and planning decision-making processes. Impact was also achieved in the domain of 'understanding, learning, and participation', by stimulating public interest and engagement in research, enhancing cultural understanding of issues and phenomena, and shaping awareness and understanding through research.</p>		
2. Underpinning research – References in section 3 are indicated by number (e.g., R1)		
The Harpswell later medieval 'Landscape and community' research project		
<p>Research directly underpinned impact through the design and delivery of a 'Landscape and community' project, which ran through 2016-18. This charted in detail the medieval and later development of the settlement of Harpswell, Lincolnshire, and its environs. Through the means of a directed community project, research extended knowledge and understanding of Harpswell and its locality, as well as enhanced recognition of its significance in wider regional national terms as a historical, archaeological and heritage site of the later medieval period. Research identified activity spanning the seventh century to the modern period, and included evidence for domestic, industrial, and agricultural activity. This data informs academic understanding of medieval settlement evolution in the region, and feeds into national debates regarding the origin and development of villages and historic landscapes.</p>		
<p>Professional and volunteer participants deployed a range of archaeological and historical methods, including geophysical surveys, documentary and cartographic investigation, and open area excavation. The project successfully co-created knowledge and understanding of a particular local landscape, and developed related research practice.</p>		
<p>To date, publication emerging from this project has included an article for popular/professional readership (see Section 5, S4), and findings have also informed the content of developing public planning documentation (see Section 5, S3).</p>		

Wider background research

Broader and ongoing research from late 2015 has also advanced and deepened knowledge and understanding of early, mid and later medieval settlements in Britain more generally. Moreover, this informed the site-specific investigations and interpretations at Harpswell. This more general research has taken as its main areas of focus twelfth century fortified sites and early medieval settlement sites.

Research activity, primarily through to 2016, explored the material evidence of the twelfth-century civil war popularly known as ‘the Anarchy’. This analysed a wide range of artefacts, buildings, castles, siegeworks, fortified monasteries, and bishop’s palaces, as well as field, archival and desk-top-based sources. Publications have included an article (2016) (R3) and a joint-authored monograph (2016) (R1). The monograph attracted recognition in reviews in peer-reviewed journals, for example: [Cambridge Archaeological Journal](#); [Journal of British Studies](#); and [Landscape History](#), ‘This is an enormously valuable and engaging book, and it should now become essential reading for any who study Stephen’s reign, Anglo-Norman warfare, or indeed the social history of twelfth-century England’.

A separate strand explored the high-status landscapes of early medieval Britain, and in particular investigated the function and status of metalworkers within elite settlement complexes (R2). Many of these early centres continued as important ecclesiastical and secular centres throughout the medieval and later periods, and this research enhances understanding of the nascent stages of these preeminent places.

Further ongoing interest has been directed towards early medieval occupation deposits and artefacts close to historic (mid-C19th) settlement zones, as evident through searches various of datasets. This has recognised the limitations of small-scale intrusive investigation, the frequency of encountering early medieval settlement in currently occupied environs, and its significance in shaping subsequent settlement and landscape character.

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

* Independently peer-reviewed journal articles

1. Creighton, O.H. and **Wright, D.W.** (2016) *Anarchy: War and Status in Twelfth-century Landscapes of Conflict* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press).
2. * **Wright, D. W.** (2019) Crafters of kingship: smiths, elite power, and gender in early medieval Europe. *Medieval Archaeology*, 63, 2, 271-97.
3. * **Wright, D.W.**, Creighton, O.H., Trick, S. & Fradley, M. (2016) ‘Power, conflict and ritual on the fen-edge: the Anarchy-period castle at Burwell, Cambridgeshire, and its pre-Conquest landscape’, *Landscape History*, 37, 1, 25-50.

4. Details of the impact – Sources in section 5 are indicated by number (e.g., S1)

The impact achieved between September 2015 and July 2020 was associated primarily with the ‘Landscape and community’ (Harpswell) project, but was also reflected in some public engagement events and activity drawing on the other wider and ongoing areas of research interest.

Community and public engagement

Impact associated with the ‘Landscape and community’ project was achieved through BGU’s Annual Digs, 2016 and 2017, directed by Wright, and in other related legacy up to 2020. Impact was reflected in the domains of ‘creativity, culture, and society’ (collaboration with heritage sector, resulting in enhancements to cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, including exhibitions); and ‘understanding, learning, and participation’ (stimulating public interest and engagement in research; enhancing cultural understanding of issues and phenomena; raising awareness and understanding by engaging the public).

These impact types were reflected in: visitor participation, uptake of training, and sustained engagement with groups. This was supported by strategically designed and integrated outreach activities around the Annual Digs. Engagement took place in field and other environments, and beneficiaries were various: lay volunteers (Lincolnshire Archaeology Group), students, the local community, regional visitors, and international participants. Opportunities included: excavation, geophysical survey, and post-excavation analysis and conservation.

Site open days at the Harpswell Digs in 2016 and 2017 were delivered with support from other stakeholders (such as, the Collection Museum, Lincoln; Lincolnshire County Council Portable Antiquities Scheme; LAG) - over 1,000 visitors attended.

- 'The excavation produced huge interest from those living locally ... open days were held for both years, (combined with open garden days at Hall Farm) ... a number of stands were organised, both for adults and children and involving hands-on activities, by other local historical and archaeological organisations. The Open Days were a huge success, not just in the number of attendees but also in their enthusiasm and the amount of time they stayed to see and take a part in everything. A highlight were the brilliant explications given of the site to large groups of visitors at regular intervals' (**S1**).
- 'Largely because of 2016/17 research, LAG members felt more confident, and better skills-equipped, in undertaking other archaeological investigations independently of BGU. Another key element of learning was a better understanding of the importance of setting clear research aims and outputs. Subsequently LAG raised funds during 2018 and has completed an excavation at two more areas of the field at Hall Farm Harpswell during 2019. The areas were chosen following discussions with the researchers' (**S2**).

On completion, a permanent exhibition was installed at Harpswell. Results of geophysical survey were published in the *Medieval Archaeology Newsletter* (**S3**). A legacy initiative was established by LAG, a community archaeology society and project partner, resulting in a subsequent fieldwork season directed by them in 2018.

- 'The BGU project has very effectively demonstrated a model of how this can be done' (**S1**).
- 'It is clear that the archaeological research by the BGU excavations of 2016 and 2017 have led to significant positive impacts on, and development of, the Lincoln Archaeology Group' (**S2**).

Impact was also achieved in the domain of 'impacts on the environment', with current and future environmental policy and planning decisions being informed by research evidence. Findings formed the basis of a LCC Character Assessment (**S4**), which became available to support the development of Hemswell and Harpswell Council's Neighbourhood Plan, from January 2020.

- 'The BGU project has had significant ongoing effects on the status and protection of the site' (informing potential extension of the Scheduled Monument Order, renewal of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and application of the Character Assessment) (**S1**).

The 2018 BGU Annual Dig was held at the University's new Lincoln Newport site (LORIC). Ongoing community engagement was more limited, due to the physical constraints of the site. However, the excavation hosted public open days, and in-situ live broadcasting by BBC Radio Lincolnshire with accompanying social media coverage (**S5**).

Public lectures, talks and publication

Some further public impact was achieved from September 2015, in the domain of 'understanding, learning, and participation' (stimulating public interest and engagement in research).

This was reflected in event and writing activities, with beneficiaries being general public audiences/readerships:

- **1 magazine article** for popular archaeology (*Current Archaeology*) (**S6**);
- **15 public talks** to: Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Spirit of Sutterby Group (3 talks); Council

for British Archaeology East Midlands, Hough-on-the-Hill History Group, Louth Naturalists Antiquarian and Literary Society, Nettleham Archaeology Group, Historical Association (Lincoln), Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (3 talks), Torpel Manor Archaeological Project, The Collection (Lincoln), and Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Community and public engagement

1. Testimonial: Mark Tatam, landowner, Hall Farm, Harpswell, 12 October 2020.
2. Testimony: Brian Porter, Chair, Lincoln Archaeology Group, 9 October 2020.
3. Planning document: Hemswell and Harpswell Character Assessment, July 2018, http://parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/Files/Parish/83/Hemswell_Character_Assessment_website_version.pdf;
4. Professional/popular media: *Medieval Archaeology Newsletter*, Spring 2017, <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/SMAN57.pdf>;
5. Public media: BBC Radio Lincolnshire and Twitter coverage, 6 July 2016. <https://twitter.com/BBCRadioLincs/status/1015176667369820162?s=20>.

Public lectures, talks and publication

6. Professional/popular media: Wright, D.W. (2016) 'The archaeology of the Anarchy', *Current Archaeology*, 317.