

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Liverpool		
Unit of Assessment: Archaeology (15)		
Title of case study: Managing and Appreciating Historic Graveyards and Cemeteries		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2020		
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:
Professor Harold Mytum	Professor of Archaeology	2008 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Most historic burial monuments have at best had only inscriptions recorded, and these are rarely archived. Very few have their archaeological attributes recorded, despite being important heritage assets that are deteriorating through erosion and mismanagement, with many threatened by church redundancy and reuse. Mytum's research has highlighted the above- and below-ground archaeological potential of historic burial grounds and has provided updated data recording and, for the first time, systems for archiving and analysis to enable effective monument recording. Mytum's historic mortuary archaeology research (coffins and fittings and memorials) has led to changes in professional practice by heritage practitioners, Diocesan Advisory Committees, and community groups.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Mytum has researched burial grounds and their memorials throughout the period, conducting primary fieldwork in the UK, Republic of Ireland and Australia [3.1, 3.2]. The research demonstrates the changes in style and materials of commemorative monuments in graveyards and cemeteries over time and over space at the scale of the burial ground, the region, nationally, and internationally. It explores issues of identity and religion, development of production workshops and the shift from craft to mass production, and the ways in which the formalisation of burial grounds with coffins, vaults and memorials formed part of the improvement mentality of the 18th and 19th centuries. Through a combination of detailed contextual studies and wider comparative analyses using data from several countries and indeed globally, Mytum has brought insights from mortuary data to current research themes in historic and post-medieval archaeology.</p> <p>Research into coffins and their fittings, mortsafes for body protection and comparing coffin decoration with that of memorials, led to a co-edited volume with 4 chapters by Mytum as sole or co-author [3.4]. This volume considers for the first time the development of historic coffins and fittings within an international comparative context and is the first substantial publication on historic below-ground mortuary material culture beyond the single-site monograph, involving the leading researchers in the UK, USA and Australia [3.4]. Mytum also led the development of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) in graveyard recording and other historical archaeology artefact categories [3.5]. This method of merging numerous photographs with different lighting direction allows the creation of an interactive image that enhances identification of text, imagery and carving techniques. Use of RTI can remove the need for the taking of potentially damaging rubbings of memorials.</p> <p>Mytum also extended his activity into applied research, successfully winning the competitive bid within the Cemeteries and Churchyards in section 4D2 of the National Heritage Protection</p>		

Plan 2011-2015 [5.1]. In this Historic England project, Mytum evaluated the status of physical and digital burial ground recording and their integration within Historic Environment Records (HERs) across England (project 6358). This research identified the limitations of previous recording and the lack of archived records, particularly digital sources, and proposed policies to improve archiving and access [3.6]. This led Historic England to fund a further project Discovering England's Burial Spaces (DEBS): Enabling new forms of community engagement through digital experience (Historic England project 7533, via University of York), "*DEBS is a direct response to Mytum et al's EH 6358 report*" [5.2A, p.4] with Mytum as the team member to develop an enhanced recording system for burial ground monument and landscape recording and analysis [3.3] and, collaboratively, a digital archiving system through the Archaeology Data Service. The system enables new data to be entered and archived, but also the updating and entry of legacy data from previous surveys.

3. References to the research

3.1 Mytum, H. 2020 Commemoration and Improvement: Parramatta St. John's Cemetery, New South Wales, in its context 1788 to c. 1840, *The Antiquaries Journal* 100, 374-407. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581520000281> Peer reviewed.

3.2 Mytum, H. 2020 Forgetting and remembering: Scots and Ulster Scots memorials in eighteenth-century Ulster, and Pennsylvania and nineteenth-century New South Wales, in N. Evans and A. McCarthy (eds.) *Death in the Diaspora: British and Irish Gravestones*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 14-51. <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3060665/> Also available as physical copy.

3.3 Mytum, H. 2019 Recording and Analysing Burial grounds advice documentation <http://www.debs.ac.uk/>, completely updating Mytum, H. 2000, 2002 *Recording and Analysing Graveyards*. Council for British Archaeology *Practical Handbook in Archaeology* 15 and intermediate versions of code sheets and recording form. Sections by Mytum: Carrying out a project <http://www.debs.ac.uk/carryingoutaproject.html> ; Recording <http://www.debs.ac.uk/recording.html> ; Identifying Monument Types <http://www.debs.ac.uk/monumenttypes.html> ; Photography and Additional Recording <http://www.debs.ac.uk/photography.html> ; Making a Plan <http://www.debs.ac.uk/planning.html> ; Interpreting Your Data <http://www.debs.ac.uk/interpreting.html> Edited versions are also available at <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/recording-memorials/> .

3.4 H. Mytum and L. Burgess (eds.) 2018 *Death Across the Oceans. Archaeology of Coffins and Vaults in Britain, America and Australia*, 75-93. Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, Washington. ISBN 9781944466169. Peer reviewed. Available as physical copy.

3.5 Mytum, H. and J.R. Peterson 2018 The Application of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) in Historical Archaeology. *Historical Archaeology* 52(2), 489-503. Peer reviewed. Open access at [doi:10.1007/s41636-018-0107-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s41636-018-0107-x)

3.6 Mytum, H. 2015 A Project Brief for Developing Local Assessment Toolkits – a scoping study to look at developing a standard model for recording cemeteries and burial grounds. English Heritage [now Historic England] Project no. 6358 report. <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3001175/>

4. Details of the impact

Mytum's research, and in particular the Discovering England's Burial Spaces (DEBS) methodology [3.3], has led to significant changes in heritage policy and practice by national organisations and regional authorities with responsibility for the protection of burial grounds. Mytum's methods of recording and analysing burial grounds have also been adopted by major

commercial archaeology units for large-scale excavation projects in England [3.3, 3.4]. By working with local community groups and charities, Mytum's research has helped to change the way in which communities appreciate and care for their local heritage.

National and regional policy and practice

Mytum's recording system [3.3] has been adopted by the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (Historic England and the Church of England) in providing *"comprehensive guidelines covering treatment of human remains and associated artefacts and grave markers"* [5.2C,1], notably *"Dealing with gravestones"* [5.2C,39]. The Church of England Head of Church Buildings Strategy states that Mytum's system *"for the CBA and with support from the DEBS project for recording burial monuments in churchyards has been adopted by the Church of England as the national professional standard"* [5.2D, 3.3]. This is applied by all Diocesan Advisory Committees (DACs), local authorities and field archaeologists. The British Association of Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology recommends Mytum's methodology [3.3] for recording non-skeletal funerary remains: *"Mytum's publications have been invaluable to us in the creation of these professional standards"* [5.2C, 3.3, 3.4].

Mytum's recording system [3.3] is now accepted practice by numerous regional organisations. For example, the Derby (DAC) and Peak District National Park Authority Archaeologist advises the use of Mytum's methodology for graveyard projects in the Peak District [5.3B]. The County Durham HER Officer notes that the methodology is used as *"standard"* in Planning Conditions [5.3B], and that DEBS will be used to archive legacy data from previous graveyard recording projects [5.3A]. The Secretary of York DAC notes that Mytum's recording methods are now standard policy *"in all cases where archaeological implications of any changes are identified"* [5.3A], so contractors must ensure that *"coffin fittings are recorded alongside human remains, that memorials are suitably recorded before movement, and that conservation works are fit for purpose"* [3.3, 3.4, 3.5]. With approximately 20 applications per year, this has protected heritage assets including coffins and gravestones that otherwise would have degraded or been damaged through incorrect management, including several examples identified by the York DAC Church Buildings Advisor [5.3B].

Commercial archaeology

There are 2 multi-million-pound excavation and conservation projects currently taking place at Hull Holy Trinity burial ground and at Hull Minster. York DAC Church Buildings Advisor notes that, *"In both these projects memorials and below-ground burial archaeology have been significant considerations in the design and implementation of works, and Harold Mytum's research experience has enabled him to recommend modifications to both archaeological briefs and the Written Statements of Investigation (WSI) required for excavation and memorial recording which were adopted by the DAC, form part of the approval conditions, and are implemented by the contractors"* [5.3B].

The Senior Project Manager for the Holy Trinity excavations states: *"Mytum's research has been influential not only on our systems for surveying and recording the burial monuments and coffin remains, but also in the manner that we propose to interpret the full suite of archaeological remains"* [5.6B, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4]. The Head of Heritage Burial Services at major archaeological unit Oxford Archaeology notes that *"An important part of this work is your research [noting 3.3, 3.4]. This research enables us to analyse and interpret our data more effectively. In fact, it is the industry standard for the work we do"* [5.6A, 3.3].

The Operations and Volunteer Assistant at the Coffin Works, Birmingham, states this *"is a time capsule museum preserving the Newman Brothers coffin furniture manufactory [and] Harold Mytum's chapters [in 3.4] ... are a really valuable resource ... and were used by myself and other members of the team for research and volunteer training"* [5.6C].

Community heritage: managing and preserving graveyards

Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) is a national charity supporting people to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds (www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/about-us) [5.5B]. The CfGA Director notes a change in CfGA policy due to Mytum's research: *"you discussing cultural history... has been really influential"*, and *"we now include volunteer activities around monument recording."* [5.5C, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3] Mytum provided downloadable resources for recording for CfGA the website [5.5A, 3.3], and CfGA used Mytum's research in *The Beautiful Burial Ground* DVD for community groups planning churchyard management and recording [5.5A]. Through CfGA and HLF, Mytum led regional workshops on graveyard recording and management methods in Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Oxfordshire, Yorkshire, Limerick (Ireland), Enniskillen (Northern Ireland), Cardiff, and Bangor (Wales) [5.5B]. Mytum's research and methodology [3.3], now promoted by CfGA, improves recording methods, increases the level of detail recorded, and enables permanently archived results with the DEBS system.

Mytum's recording methodology [3.3] has already been employed by several community groups. CfGA leads *"a heritage recording project in Birmingham (involving 5 cemeteries and funded by Historic England) inspired by your work"* [5.5B, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5]. Derby DAC Archaeological Advisor and Peaks National Park Archaeologist has *"used it several times as a professional and with various community groups, Young Archaeologists' Clubs (YAC) etc."* [5.4, 3.3]. Leavesden Hospital History Association applied the methodology to *"record 510 cremation markers and 30 monument headstones"*, capturing data that had been lost for 60 years *"due to many previous cemetery records being lost or destroyed over time"* [5.8A, 3.3]. Emsay-with-Eastby Historical Research Group used it to survey 4 churchyards in the Yorkshire Dales and *"promoted Harold's approach to several other local community groups, encouraging them to adopt his model of gravestone analysis, and take their local studies beyond the simple collection of memorial inscriptions"* [5.8B, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5]. Meanwhile, the Spirit of Sutterby HLF project (Lincolnshire) has *"already compiled the first draft of the Sutterby gravestones document"* [5.7C]. By using Mytum's methodology [3.3], these community organisations not only record their local heritage in greater detail than before, but can permanently add their records to the national archives through the DEBS system.

Using Mytum's research methods [3.3] has led to greater community involvement in heritage. The Slingsby HLF report notes that recorders gained *"new knowledge, new skills, new connections"*, and *"began to swap stories about 'their' stone, sharing discoveries and stories that led to other conversations not just about history, but also village life today"* [5.7]. Slingsby Local History Group observed this was a *"good way of getting church and non-church people to meet and reminding everyone in the village that the churchyard belongs to them"* [5.8]. 1,500 positive social media comments attest to the important role of the Leavesden Hospital survey to *"regenerate and restore this important part of local history for our community to remember and cherish"* [5.8A]. One Emsay-with-Eastby survey participant said *"I will never look at gravestones in the same way again. I only ever looked at what the inscriptions said"* [5.8].

Particular contribution of the submitted unit's research and acknowledgement of other key research contributions:

The DEBS project: digital input, initial community training (T.Pillatt, N.Beale, University of York). Mytum created the recording protocols and the data spreadsheets to be converted to an on-line format by T.Pillatt. Mytum contributed to community training, provided case study exemplars, and wrote all advice materials for project planning and survey.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 Mytum G Historic England Documentation.pdf

- Historic England (then English Heritage) statement of national priority in researching burial grounds: National Heritage Protection Plan 2013 extract 4D2, Cemeteries and Churchyards

5.2 Mytum G Best practice documents.pdf

- reports and professional best practice statements and emails showing Mytum's research supporting industry-standard methods
- 5.2A Project 7533 Discovering England's Burial Spaces (DEBS) Description (2017)
- 5.2B APABE 2017 *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, pp 1, 39
- 5.2C Email from BABAO President, BABAO Code of Practice 2019
- 5.2D Email from the Head of Church Buildings Strategy, Church of England

5.3 Mytum G York DAC.pdf

- letters from Diocese of York professional staff regarding Mytum's research directly affecting policy and practice across the diocese
- 5.3A York DAC Secretary
- 5.3B York DAC Church Buildings Advisor

5.4 Mytum G HER and DAC archaeologists.pdf

- emails from local authority archaeologists regarding Mytum's research directly affecting their policy and practice
- 5.4A County Durham HER Officer
- 5.4B Peak District National Park Authority and Derby DAC archaeologist

5.5 Mytum G CfGA Officers.pdf

- emails from Caring for God's Acre professional staff regarding Mytum's research directly affecting policy and practice across CfGA policy and practice
- 5.5A CfGA Project Support Office
- 5.5B CfGA Communications and Development Manager
- 5.5C CfGA Director

5.6 Mytum G Commercial professional practice.pdf

- emails from commercial field and museum archaeologists regarding Mytum's research directly affecting their practice and from
- 5.6A Head, OA Heritage Burial Services Historic mortuary archaeology
- 5.6B OA Senior Project Manager Hull excavations
- 5.6C Statement from Operations and Volunteer Assistant, The Coffin Works, Birmingham 2016-2019 and now working with CfGA

5.7 Mytum G HLF community projects.pdf

- reports and emails regarding Mytum's research directly affecting activity and attitudes
- 5.7A Slingsby Training Evaluation Report for HLF
- 5.7B Study day on headstones at All Saints Church Slingsby, York
- 5.7C Spirit of Sutterby Workshop

5.8 Mytum G DEBS community projects.pdf

- reports and emails regarding Mytum's research directly affecting activity and attitudes
- 5.8A Brooks Leavesden letter
- 5.8B Embsay DEBS feedback