

## MATERIAL LEGACIES: SHAPING THINGS AND PLACES THROUGH HERITAGE

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**Abstract** This chapter describes the significance of material qualities of the legacies produced by collaborative research that focuses on heritage. Collaborative research works partly through the intangible processes of networking, skills development and so on, but also often through encounters with things, places and landscapes. Material creations and outputs are also frequently made in collaborative research, and this chapter provides a frame of reference and comparative examples. Heritage research addresses problems of the material directly and so can give resources in this field to those working on other kinds of collaborative research. The chapter presents a series of narratives of materials from collaborative heritage projects, which in themselves reflect the forms of knowledge created by those projects. We conclude by noting the significance of being in touch with materials, and the significance of things and places in collaborative research, along with how with the distinctive politics of materials unfold through them.

### INTRODUCTION: WHY DO MATERIALS MATTER?

Historic research, through its very nature, questions old narratives and develops new ones. Material goods, taken out of circulation perhaps for decades, centuries or millennia, will re-enter society, receive new roles and have effects wildly different from those anticipated by their makers. The site of a former house or castle, once rediscovered, provides the impetus for a range of experiences that may change the worldview of a person or community. In heritage – by which we mean the process of being involved with the past – communities make links between past, present and future through encountering materials in different forms. Heritage thus provides a particularly good field for exploring how ‘the material’ matters in collaborative research.

On one level, we need to recognise that all life is of course material and that it happens within places and landscapes. Archaeologist Ian Hodder describes the ‘entanglement’ of humans and things, which are forever making and being made by each other. He writes: ‘humans get caught in a double bind in relation to things since they both rely on things (dependence) and have to reproduce things they have made (dependency)’ (Hodder 2012: 112). We make things, and so we have to go on making things. That these human-thing interdependent relations happen in places, and that such places matter, is also fundamental (Casey 1996). Places are the very grounds in which life, including social and cultural life, happens. When we consider materials in the legacies of collaborative research, we need to acknowledge the constant interaction between people, things and places.

In the particular cultural world of the professional heritage sector and parts of academic heritage studies, however, the ‘material’ world is frequently divided

from the non-material with reference to the 'tangible' and 'intangible'. The recognition by UNESCO in 2003 that heritage could take the intangible forms of performance, ritual, voice and movement was a shift from a preservationist discourse focused on historic sites and objects. The way was opened towards valuing contemporary cultural practices and performances along with the means by which they persist through time. While this is clearly important, the problem is that materiality (i.e. the quality of being material) becomes associated with just the monumental and the iconic (Smith 2006). From here emerges what Smith calls the 'authorised' version of heritage of professional museums and tourist sites in opposition to the seemingly more personal scale of intangible cultural heritage. So there is a 'politics' of heritage, in which heritage professionals are empowered to define and act as the stewards of heritage, preserving it 'forever' for a generic 'public'. When materiality is linked narrowly to the desire to preserve for posterity and 'keep things safe', limits to those who can use, touch or adapt the designated thing may appear (Hetherington 2003).

### **Key Resources for thinking about legacy**

This chapter uses theories of materials, place and heritage. Materials and places need to be thought of as open rather than closed off, and therefore heritage should be amenable to change and reinterpretation. Collaborative research happens through material encounters.

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### **EXPLORING THE MATERIAL LEGACIES OF HERITAGE RESEARCH**

We argue in this chapter that the sense of time and the constituencies of heritage as a universal, continuous public may be subverted by the realities of communities, power, and multivocality. Rather than drawing a dividing line between apparently non-material research outcomes (e.g. knowledge, values) and material ones (things such as artworks or archaeological finds, or places re-made through research), we seek to explore the mutual shaping of material and non-material processes. Places, landscapes and things come into being through means which are neither exclusively performative nor exclusively material, but both performative and material. 'Heritage' from this perspective acts not by way of a passive handing-down of traditions but by the continual re-creation of cultural forms, as generations mix and novices learn alongside skilled practitioners (Ingold 2000). Perhaps the most interesting theme is how the process of collaborative research in heritage specifically entails the emergence and negotiation of knowledge through materials. This approach does not retreat

to a post-modern relativism in which all heritage is equal, but it is to reveal the actual sites and conditions of the production of knowledge about the past, and thereby to open wider the possibility of alternative voices.

So, while the non-material is important and perhaps under-valued in more positivist research discourses, collaborative research does more than just attend to the intangible aspects of social life often implied by the rhetoric of co-production. It engages with materials in interesting ways, creating material assets and outcomes, affecting existing things and places, and wrestling with the particular problems that materials throw up for research. How, for example, do processes of material discovery, creativity, ownership, and curation work in collaborative research? Narratives of material/non-material entanglement continually emerge from heritage projects, and research in other disciplines too. Such projects are working with and through materials as well as through non-material processes, and the qualities of the materials (as things, objects, places, landscapes, etc.) are central to the progress and legacies of the research.

To this end, we will present a series of narratives from the heritage research we have been involved with. They are written from within the projects but they draw on diverse voices and perspectives, and they are also informed by a process of joint evaluation and reflection. This included shared meetings, project and site visits, and working together on the meaning and value of legacies in the context of heritage research with communities. In some cases (Caerau, Bennachie and York), we are dealing with collaborative research as 'mutual learning' (Facer, introduction to this volume), in which communities and universities are working together in a multifaceted way over a long time period. In others, such as the Sheffield projects, the collaboration has - so far - been of a shorter duration and yet is doing much to 'correct the record' (ibid.) of silences and gaps in heritage research. What emerges is a set of diverse practices, and diverse entanglements with materials, that value open-endedness and wide participation in the research process. At the end of the chapter, we discuss common themes and touch again on the politics of materials in this kind of research.

### **Projects in Focus in this chapter**

**Caerau and Ely Rediscovering Heritage Project** : A collaboration between Cardiff University, schools, residents and community group Action in Caerau and Ely, with the aims of raising awareness of heritage and challenging marginalisation. Co-production is based on mutual learning and long-term partnership between the university and community.

**Bennachie Landscapes Project**: A collaboration between the University of Aberdeen, community group the Bailies of Bennachie, schools and local people, with the aim of exploring landscape history through research. Co-production is based on mutual learning and long-term partnership between the university and community.

**Researching Community Heritage**: The University of Sheffield offered support to local community groups in undertaking heritage research in archaeology, oral history and archival research. Co-production is based on communities taking the lead and learning skills and how to access resources from the university.

York: Living With History: This was part of the 'How Should Decisions About Heritage Be Made?' project (see chapter 4). The aim was to experiment with participative approaches focused on action and argument, in the context of a place known as a heritage city.

*A question of things and places (Oliver Davis )*

The Caerau and Ely Rediscovering (CAER) Heritage Project is not a straight-forward community archaeology project. It has from the beginning embraced co-production principles and sought to create new communities of practice through the process of multi-disciplinary research. However, whilst the project aspires to full co-production, and involves and values the contributions of community members in the research process, project activities are currently largely developed by the academic team and the group Action in Caerau and Ely. In this sense CAER is best thought of as a middle-way collaborative project which attempts to amalgamate top-down and bottom-up approaches (Ancarno *et al.* 2015, 128).

Amongst the wide-ranging suite of co-production activities, it is the physical experience of archaeological research, particularly excavation, which has often been the most effective for addressing the project's social objectives of inclusion and participation. Excavations have centred on Caerau Hillfort, a large prehistoric Iron Age settlement that has seen little previous archaeological attention and research. The hillfort is today surrounded by the housing estates of Caerau and Ely in west Cardiff, which face significant economic and social issues, not least high unemployment and poor educational attainment. At issue here is how the things that are found become part of relationships of identity, power and place amongst people in the present, as much as they inform on the past.

Archaeological excavation, including that at Caerau, culminates in the production of a material assemblage that includes the intangible – the 'story' of the site – and the tangible – an often considerable collection of written records, artefacts and ecofacts. The curation of this material assemblage – 'preservation by record' – takes on particular importance, not least because the process of excavation itself is inherently destructive (once excavated, the site cannot be put back as it was). Yet this raises issues about the material assemblage, such as statutory obligations, legal requirements, ownership, storage, access and interpretation.

Everything on the Caerau hilltop is legally the property of the landowner, and moreover, the site and its finds are an emplaced part of the biography of the hill and local community. Yet, as a condition for granting consent for the excavation, Cadw (the Welsh Government's historic environment service) insisted that the material should ultimately reside with the National Museum of Wales who could curate it in the long-term. Under current heritage legislation this is a responsible position. However the required removal of material assets, from a community which has very few, reinforces opinions of marginalisation and disenfranchisement by local people.

Such contradictions can be complex to address. It was necessary to obtain a signed contract from the landowner in order that the material could be donated to the National Museum. Initially he was reluctant – this was material after all he associated with his land, the place where he lived and farmed – although pragmatically he realised that the benefit of the excavation to the community

would not be realised without this condition. There were broader concerns amongst the community too that the material would simply be taken away and never seen again. We have been careful not to do this. Considerable thought was given to involving local communities in every stage of the archaeological process from survey and excavation through to finds analysis and interpretation. Although the artefacts are sometimes stored at the University for periods of time, they are all brought to the local community to be worked on, which has included a range of adult learners' courses analysing the finds. However, the ultimate destination for the finds is far from resolved. Legally they are now the property of the National Museum, but the desire for some of them at least to remain in the locality in which they were found is strong and must be recognised.

The discovery of things is almost always the most engaging aspect of the excavations. It is very noticeable that almost all volunteers treat archaeological material with the upmost respect – even those artefacts (such as endless Roman pottery sherds) which professional archaeologists may regard as relatively unimportant. This is undoubtedly linked to a sense of ownership – this is *their* history – but also the shock at being trusted to be involved in such work that they consider being the realm of professionals. Perhaps the very physical act of being part of excavation and the very act of discovery strengthens the relationship between things, place and identity and enhances the values assigned to particular objects. This was exemplified during the 2014 excavations when one volunteer was less interested in the fragment of a 6,000 year old Neolithic polished stone axe as he was with a fragment of coconut shell he had discovered in a spoil heap. The shell had brought back childhood memories from the 1960s when fairs had been held on the hill every Whitsun, and he remembered winning goldfish from coconut shies. Such personal accounts are often impossible to recover from archaeology alone. They highlight the affective relationships of things and places, which we need, perhaps, to better account for not just in our stories of the past but in the curation and management of the present, too.

#### *At once landscape and thing (Jo Vergunst)*

The hill of Bennachie is a prominent landmark about 20 miles north west of Aberdeen in the Aberdeenshire countryside. There, a community group called the Bailies of Bennachie have since 1973 been looking after the hill, protecting it from unwanted development and working to ensure public access to the hill and public interest in its history. While the presence of multi-period archaeological remains has long been known about, in 2010 the Bailies began a co-ordinated effort to research the natural and cultural landscape of the hill in the form of the 'Bennachie Landscapes Project' that was given an initial shape by our co-author and independent archaeologist Colin Shepherd. In 2011 the University of Aberdeen secured funding through Connected Communities to work with the Bailies, with a specific focus on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century crofting colony that existed on its eastern slopes. While the Bailies had been involved in surveying the colony in the late 2000s, the Connected Communities funding enabled an upgrade of the archaeological research at the hill, along with archival and oral historical work that were also premised on notions of co-production.

As at the Caerau hillfort described above, the process of archaeological field research has been very engaging for local participants. Indeed, it is the specific form of engagement with the landscape that has been so revealing. With a focus on low-tech, easily accessible forms of fieldwork (such as offset surveys and

shovel test pitting that require little more than measuring tapes, sieves and shovels) along with excavation and finds analysis, much of the work has been about the collective re-thinking of relationships with the landscape both in the past and today. The croft houses and dykes discovered during the work are made of stone quarried from the hill, and we can imagine the quarries deepening into the hillside as the houses and dykes rise up from it. Now the walls have tumbled back into the land again and participants are faced with the task of distinguishing the worked blocks of granite from the natural. Each is 'landscape' and 'thing', which counters the modern concepts of landscape as scenery and material culture as commodity.

As we dug test-pits, participants reflected on the depth and richness of the topsoil, which is testament to the work of the crofters to improve it. The 'finds' in it, pottery that is often richly coloured and decorated, made us think of the crofters not as marginalised hill-dwellers scraping a meagre living, but as thinking about the future, and working on the land for the future. The narratives told by the community and university participants at a subsequent exhibition shared these new understandings of the links between the things, the landscapes and the people. Participants are enabled to think themselves about new futures for the land, through research on the futures of the past.

A newspaper journalist came to a post-excavation day at the Bennachie Centre, at the foot of the hill, in order to write a story for the local newspaper. We were all carefully labelling the washed pot sherds and categorising into groups of transfer ware, sponge ware, white ware, and so on, and we trying out some reconstructions too. The journalist asked one of us: 'Are you an archaeologist?' 'No', was the reply, 'I'm an enthusiast.' On one level, the lack of professional identity in the community participant jarred with her manifest archaeological expertise in dealing with the pot sherds in front of her. But perhaps the declaration of enthusiasm for the task at hand is the more fundamental point, and one that might serve as a more useful grounding for collaborative heritage research. It is fundamentally from such enthusiasm that the power to take part in heritage develops in communities, and not merely to be its passive recipients and consumers.

#### *Long-term landscapes of research (Colin Shepherd)*

In between accumulations of intangible heritage and codified datasets, there are fuzzy co-productive spaces. Further parts of the Bennachie Landscapes Project, introduced above, can be explored in this regard, where longer time-frames can permit a more nuanced analysis of co-production than of those of shorter durations.

Keig Primary School in Aberdeenshire has been attempting to understand the cultural and ecological development of their parish. This has included working alongside myself in the role of community archaeologist for two hours every week of the school year since 2010. A hitherto unknown mill site and an 18<sup>th</sup> century building are being excavated and these form the grounds within which social and ecological change are discussed with the pupils.

Interesting temporal cycles enter the research. At Keig, the work unfolds alongside the school terms, but a longer cycle involves pupils progressing through the year groups. Periodically, the fundamentals of the purposes of the

project need to be rehearsed to the new, younger pupils. Co-production proceeds by means of discovery of the local landscape, becoming a formative aspect of experiential development. During discussions, Keig teachers have often remarked that it is likely to be many years hence that the personal effects of the landscape study will manifest itself in the life choices and behaviour of the pupils. The understanding of how cultural and material landscapes is made will, the teachers feel, impact upon them increasingly as they progress through their lives and encounter new environments. The legacies from this co-productive process – understood here as the ways in which the lives of the young people are being affected by the research – are unending and certainly defy quantification.

The work at Keig, and that described below at Druminnor, have both been supported by local landowners who also wish discover more about the landscapes within which their families have lived for generations. Parents and other local inhabitants in understanding more about the places to which they are all affiliated. Results from the Keig project are frequently communicated at social events hosted at the school hall, which also doubles up as the local community hall. In a radical move, school work is research informing a local community about its cultural heritage. The usual educational rationale, in which older people teach younger members of the community, has been subverted.

To take a second example, the Bennachie Landscapes fieldwork group have been involved in excavations at nearby Druminnor Castle since 2012. Again, the long timeframe permits cohesion amongst participants rarely felt within the confines of short projects. Having minimal expenses, the research unfolds at a rate commensurate with extracting the maximum information from the site. As at Keig, the research develops its own cyclical pattern based upon the seasons of the year. Many participants have been around from the start, some attend more than others, and some have left and others join. Young people engage through the Young Archaeologists' Club or the University of Aberdeen, or the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for example. A school trip from Keig school presented an opportunity to stretch the pupils' observational skills and to demonstrate 'time in action' by means of the stratigraphies visible in the sides of the Druminnor trenches. For all participants and despite the changing personnel, cohesion is provided by experiencing the work itself.

So, what conclusions concerning material legacies may be gleaned from these ongoing projects? Within the groups, individuals develop roles particular to their interests and talents. All participants are drawn closer together by the passage of time and through sharing in the experience. In terms of academic research, both projects are discovering, recording and disseminating ever more detailed understandings of their landscapes. But, it is within the arenas of the intangible that further effects are hidden.

No model can replicate the effects set in train by such research. When this research involves co-production processes engaging with broader communities, the effects are even harder to follow. At Druminnor, the intangible history of medieval baronial feuding that lay behind the constant historical need for renewal at the castle is materially present within the archaeological record of those rebuilding works and in the scattered remains of the material culture of its inhabitants. This history is rehearsed as a matter of course in the local traditions of the inhabitants of the former lordships of Huntly and Forbes in Aberdeenshire. Within this co-productive 'fuzzy space', contemporary participants pool life

experiences and synthesise the material legacy with received tradition to produce a revised, contemporary historical narrative.

A key point however is that Keig and Druminnor projects both exist because of the access permitted by the owners of the land. Such access to heritage is a fundamental necessity for the subsequent regeneration of heritage as culture. The interplay of communities with their heritage initiates new cultural experiences. For the children at Keig and the community diggers at Druminnor, material legacies from the past are doorways to cultural experiences of the future. But, without access to that heritage (in these instances, their landscapes), such experiences would be impossible. Cultural development, in these particular geographical areas, would take alternative trajectories in which heritage would be less privileged. Sadly, in Scottish law all historic finds, no matter how insignificant, are the property of the crown (unlike in England and Wales, although similar circumstances can arise as described at Caerau above). Legally, it is not possible for the finds discovered in these co-productive projects to automatically reside within the communities to which they pertain.

*A story and a place (Robert Johnston)*

Marcus Hurcombe, a youth worker in Rawmarsh, Rotherham, leads a group of young children along a suburban pavement. They stop by a woodland, the start of their journey into Rawmarsh's Viking past:

'there were bears and there were wolves, very dangerous animals, you have to be really quiet. Also ogres, tree spirits, demons and monsters, not to mention marauders from other tribes of Vikings. So, carefully, come down here...'

Marcus's introduction to the children's walk is imaginative and theatrical (<https://portalstothepast.wordpress.com/film/>). It is not directly evidenced by the landscape history or archaeology of Rawmarsh. I might say 'the story is not the place': there were no ogres, demons, monsters, nor were there marauding tribes of Vikings – at least not that we can prove. And yet as contemporary myth-making, this story has much in common with early medieval cultural landscapes (Overing and Osborne 1994). It is given power and resonance by its performance at the threshold of an urban 'wild place'. How intrinsic are places to stories about the past? During community heritage research projects in and around Sheffield, we have explored the stories that we tell about places are the means through which we bring those places into being. Importantly, the stories we found are partisan, contestable, partial and fragmentary, often leaving open their endings in ways that encourage further participation.

In Sheffield, a long-established group called Heeley History Workshop researched past social life: sports clubs, excursions and so on. Heeley's boundaries are well-defined and form the geographic limits of the group's enquiries. Members of the group meet weekly, bringing documents, objects, oral history, personal memories, and debate and assemble their history of the place. Heeley's past is re-inhabited through the creation and telling of stories. The knowledge of Heeley is extremely fine-grained (and passionately contested – down to the detail of who lived next to whom), yet is not easily mapped in a cartographic sense. A University of Sheffield researcher, Gilles Marciniak (2012), asked the group to produce sketch maps showing the heritage that mattered to them in Heeley.



Almost all the maps were fairly perfunctory. This revealed not a gap between perception and reality, but instead that the stories of the past were rooted in precise but unmapable spaces.

By comparison, young people researching with Roundabout youth housing charity carried very different connections with the place they studied. The research centred on a Georgian building that is now a hostel for homeless young people, many of whom are transient and some not from the region. The history of the building was researched through the local archives and the architecture of similar buildings in Sheffield. Excursions also offered some vivid moments: visiting a former nineteenth-century asylum, one described the electric shock treatment he imagined went on inside and joked, 'I can see into the past'. As with the marauding Vikings of Rawmarsh, imagination of the past is catalysed by places. A further session worked on a scrapbook of residents' personal stories to go alongside the building research, and as with the archives, the potential for personal histories had most resonance. The building is less a historical artefact than a means through which the historical and personal can be connected. Tangible and intangible are not helpful categories as they separate what are intrinsically experienced together.

The 'Midhope at War' project was situated in a rural, moorland landscape north of Sheffield. Led by Woodhead Mountain Rescue Team, participants studied Second World War tank training ranges the troops who were billeted in nearby camps and villages. Remains of the ranges can still be found, including the shells of unexploded ordnance that are occasionally revealed from the peat and heather. Like Heeley, the participants knew their landscape intimately. Unlike Heeley, they researched it on the ground and on foot: following the metalled roads prepared for tanks, shining a torch into an underground troop shelter, searching for a rusted mobile target. Despite this material heritage, the Midhope team prioritised collecting oral histories and studying archival documents. The material places were there, knowable and known, but the stories were missing, and oral histories – the memories of elderly people in the village – were most vulnerable. Yet still, the team returned to the landscape as a means of anchoring the stories in the past. Material legacies in the forms of onsite interpretation panels and a guided walk were made.

In a lecture entitled 'The Sense of Place', poet Seamus Heaney grappled with the tension between places as intrinsic to everyday experience and places as literary constructs:

I think there are two ways in which place is known and cherished, two ways which may be complementary but which are just as likely to be antipathetic. One is lived, illiterate and unconscious, the other is learned, literate and conscious ... both are likely to co-exist in a conscious and unconscious tension. (Heaney 1980: 131)

Heaney raises a difficulty with experiences of place: there is a divergence between the richness to our intrinsic, lived experience of the world, and the constrained ways we write about and represent those experiences. Furthermore, the lived and the literary are contingent upon one another: if our experiences of places are superficial or limited, then our literate understandings will also be impoverished.

If we modify Heaney's observation to distinguish between a lived and an 'academic' reading of places (and perhaps also between a narrative and a material expression), then a strength of all these projects is that the lived and the academic, the narrative and the material were not consciously separated. In Rawmarsh, the imagined and the factual were equal. At Heeley 'talk of heritage was talk of life' that was founded in places. At Midhope, walking through the landscape and recounting stories were inseparable. What they reveal is that the stories we tell about places are intimately connected with their material history and qualities, although not in straightforward or perhaps predictable ways. Storying places allows for political, partisan and personal readings of places and things. This a formative experience for an archaeologist whose disciplined approach is to uncover the material layers of the landscape – academic and professional specialisms are usually based in a logic of separating in order to categorise. I have become more open to the bricolage of stories that make up the heritage of places, and to encourage the blurring of the technical and precise with the narrative, open and performative. Community heritage projects may lack the separations that are more critical to academic enquiry, but by performing the reverse move, of connection, they seem particularly able to open up new stories and new places.

*Material concerns in heritage decision-making (Helen Graham and the Heritage Decisions project team)*

One of the first insights of the 'How should decisions about heritage be made?' project team as we gathered together at Bede's World museum in Jarrow, north east England in March 2013 was about the material qualities of heritage. Aiming to collaboratively design our own research project, we noted that thinking of heritage as finite and non-renewable – as *material* in specific ways – was a potential block to greater direct participation in decision making by non-professionals. We noted that prioritising material preservation usually entails professional stewardship and certain kinds of bureaucratic and institutional structures and practices, such as museums, or practices of listing and scheduling: the preservation of material has tended towards specific modes of elite governance. Yet, a new politics of heritage – one which makes room for active participation by a wide range of people – requires not a simple preference of the intangible over the tangible but a more active assessment of their relationship.

An exploration of the politics of materiality within heritage practices of storytelling and memory took place through the 'York: Living with History' strand of the project. In the UK, so-called blue plaques, and plaques of various other kinds, have since the 19<sup>th</sup> century been a recognisable icon of urban heritage memorialization. Commemorating who was born in a certain house or where a specific event took place, they make material what would otherwise be intangible within the cityscape. Their own tangible and intangible qualities suggest permanence, as they require planning permission and therefore have a legal status and are made of durable materials and firmly attached to buildings. In terms of decision-making, the blue plaques in England are associated with Historic England (previously English Heritage) the organization responsible for designating and regulating 'heritage'.

To explore the decision-making process – and to draw attention to the question of what is and what is not commemorated in York – we ran two Do-It-Yourself heritage days. One using cardboard version of blue plaques and another for

LGBT History month using rainbow plaques. At both events the material qualities of the cardboard plaques was crucial. The plaques were made ourselves. They were cut out, written on, and prepared with double side sticky tape. The ritual of the event meant us going out into the streets and ceremoniously sticking the plaque on to brick or stone, with the person whose plaque it was saying a few words. Yet these very specific forms of materiality, scissors, sticky tape, surfaces on which the tape can be safely stuck (to not cause damage) were also, of course, a play on the other forms of materiality the plaques *almost* could be mistaken for. Where as the official plaques were made to last, ours were not. While the official plaques go through legal permission processed and our secured pretty much permanently to buildings. Ours were done without permission and can be very easily removed.

For those involved, the transience of the plaques meant different things. For some it was a damning indictment of histories untold by official channels. For others, the transience worked to question more the false hope of any form of heritage preservation. One of the outcomes of the DIY plaques has been digital records and blogs, but also the social connection between people who participated. The cardboard plaques commemorated above all the desire to create a living and adaptive use of heritage in the present, which would draw into being the city in which we want to live.

## SYNTHESIS: THE LEGACIES OF MATERIALS AND MATERIAL LEGACIES

### *Being in touch with materials and things*

The narratives presented here describe the significance of direct contact with the materials and things that become 'heritage' for the communities involved in research. The point is not just that field archaeology is simply popular or enjoyable for members of the public, which is noted by Simpson and Williams (2008). Tactile contact with things, through digs and forms of other heritage research, can enable a distinctive imagination of the past. It is a past made tangible, that really happened, and that is in a way made 'present' as the existence of the thing continues into today's world. The process happens variably, as shown by the different reactions at Caerau to a Neolithic find and one from the 1960s. But it is not simply that the age of an object makes it more or less distant from us. We have seen the significance of story-telling and interpretation, in which the development of a story is a key output of research, and it is the narrative afforded by the things themselves that makes them important. A potsherd found at Bennachie may be understood as part of a plate used by the actual inhabitants of a croft house, and not merely as a marker of a particular cultural style.

The legacies of things in collaborative heritage research may be less about an absolute historical value than their relational value – a value based in the relations between past and present that are created by the things that are found and handled. Such 'things' may seem to be a far cry from 'objects' discovered and preserved within the stricter realm of professional heritage practice (Smith 2006), and yet the transfers between these realms are pivot points. Things found by a community project *may* also be caught up in professional practice with all that that entails, but communities can still be involved with them if the right set of structures and the will to make it so are present. There is no necessary 'natural' or right way of organising these matters, and there should be more

discussion of how they could be in the future. For the moment, our finding is that the moments in which community participants literally 'have their hands on things' are very important for creating narratives of the past. Successful collaborative heritage projects expand the opportunities for encounters with material culture, and enable these legacies of materials to happen.

### *The material qualities of places and landscapes in collaborative heritage research*

The process of narrating and story-telling is also very much present in the qualities of places and landscapes in our examples. The potential for connections between place and narrative are well attested in anthropology amongst other disciplines (e.g. Cruikshank 1998), but our finding is that the research process itself can enable stories in places to have a 'life' - to be found, told, heard, recorded - in novel ways. Community heritage research enables narratives of places to be created by and for their inhabitants, often much more effectively than professional or academic practice can manage. Enabling people to tell a story about their places, and thus themselves, has often been a key part of the research process. Communities, through the practice of research, have been spending time in 'their' places and landscapes and thereby coming to be a part of them more knowledgeably and more richly. We need to explicitly recognise and value how research itself can be the means by which the narration of place, landscape and community happens.

The material qualities of the places are implicated deeply in the stories about them, although again this happens in different ways. At Caerau, the hill of the Iron Age fort is still very much present in the landscape, providing a counterpoint to the suburban streets that have become politically and socially removed from centres of power. Learning about the hillfort opens the possibility of understanding the landscape as powerful and influential. Developing an alternative to the preservationist forms of heritage in York also meant creating a sense of place that valued the subaltern and transient in the urban fabric, together with a more inclusive participation in creating narratives about it. In these cases and many others we have come across, the 'heritage' of place created or discovered through research is certainly material and yet combines aspects of the tangible and intangible at every turn. However, the long-term projects at Keig and Druminnor near Bennachie, and also the work at Caerau, give us pause because of the importance of relations with existing landowners. These are reminders that places in the present are often owned by powerful private individuals or organisations with whom negotiations over access need to take place. Heritage situated in places is rarely 'open', and yet research on the pasts of place and landscape can also open on to questions of ownership and use of such resources in the present too.

### *Material creations as a means of doing collaborative research*

Materials, things and landscapes are not merely the objects of research - studied as heritage - but can also be the subjects of research, or in other words the means by which research is carried out and an aspect of its legacy in themselves. Things have been made by research projects, and places and landscapes remade or otherwise influenced, and so material creations have value in both the process and results of research. At the same time, legacies of research that take material form (which we might describe specifically as

material legacies) pose challenges those involved in the research, and the way these play out in the context of heritage research is also distinctive.

Many heritage projects produce material outputs from their research. Examples of things made include the likes of exhibition panels and interpretation boards, but also art works, temporary displays, publications of many sorts, and other kinds of material culture. In different ways, these material legacies have given a tangibility to successful research processes and a feeling of achievement for participants. At Bennachie, producing exhibition banners gave the impetus to community and university participants to decide upon the historical narratives that were felt to be most significant, but also made them reflect on collective participation in the work. The 'York: Living With History' research brings out the possibilities of working creatively with materials in heritage on several levels. The temporary commemorative plaques made by this group challenged both the supposed 'permanency' of heritage (Smith 2006), and opened up the process of who is authorised to make decisions about the award of heritage status. They also drew attention to a variety of alternative sites and stories of heritage. Working with distinctive material outputs can allow community heritage projects to reflect back on the nature of what is created as heritage, rather than just considering materials as the objects of research. This leads in turn onto a critical appreciation of the political structures that control heritage and how it is valued.

There is a contrast between this interest in material outputs and the requirement that community groups funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'All Our Stories' programme provide a 'digital archive' of their projects. For many, this involved submitting photographs of their work in progress to the HistoryPin website. In our research we found a number of groups who saw this more as an awkward condition of funding rather than an opportunity to secure another kind of legacy for their work. However, this question of archiving brought up issues about the longer-term storage, use or curation of material legacies too. While a digital photo can be stored and accessed relatively straightforwardly (notwithstanding concerns about changes in technology causing compatibility problems) once a material 'asset' is created, who should it belong to, and who should be responsible for it? These questions may be particularly pertinent where groups come together for the purposes of a research project but do not necessarily have a longer-term structure. At the same time, material outcomes like a publication or exhibition can provide the impetus for a group to stick together with a goal in mind, and then continue on to further work.

## CONCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF MATERIALS IN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Where academic literature and professional practice has frequently juxtaposed 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritage, the reality for much collaborative research is more akin to Hodder's notion of an entanglement of people, materials and values. It therefore follows that concerns with the legacies of materials (materials 'from the past') and material legacies (materials created within present research) are by no means neutral, in the sense of merely academic. Contestation over meaning and interpretation, ownership and accessibility, and preservation and use, are often the very stuff of a heritage research project. Where the research involves communities or collaborative co-production, these questions take on particular import.

This leads us to reflect on the nature of collaborative heritage research itself. Community participation in the research process can work against what Smith describes as the authorised heritage discourse of the professional heritage industry. Smith argues that in the professional heritage industry, the materiality of heritage, or the way in which it is equated with discrete sites, objects, buildings, etc., is equated with 'boundedness' in a way that limits awareness of broader values and ideologies (Smith 2006, 31). She goes on to identify forms of 'subaltern or dissenting' heritage discourses in which alternative values of heritage are performed, often within community settings (ibid. 35). This kind of politics plays out through materials as much as it does through the intangible.

In all of this, we see the importance of research as a process of exploring and creating heritage that can lead to community empowerment in material as well as non-material forms. While the cumulative impact and legacies of this work are hard to judge because many projects operate on an intentionally local scale, heritage research certainly plays into broader agendas discussed in this volume. We also have seen the power of connecting community groups with each other in developing new perspectives, confidence and critical mass that can counter mainstream organisations. Heritage projects, moreover, exemplify how research is not the sole province of a university but can be a successful community-led activity, too. And in considering co-production, where university and community-based researchers work together, we can go further still towards decentralising and sharing expertise in research and power in defining the narratives of heritage.

### **Guidance for other researchers of legacy**

- Consider the material things have been encountered during the research. How have people come together, or been pulled apart, by them?
- Consider the places of research too. How have they been re-made by the research?
- Consider what has been made by the research. How could material legacies be created, curated, stored or shared?
- Find ways of telling stories that encompass the entanglements of people, things and places.
- Find ways of recognising the material qualities of politics and ethics in collaborative research. Access to and knowledge about things and places is important.

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